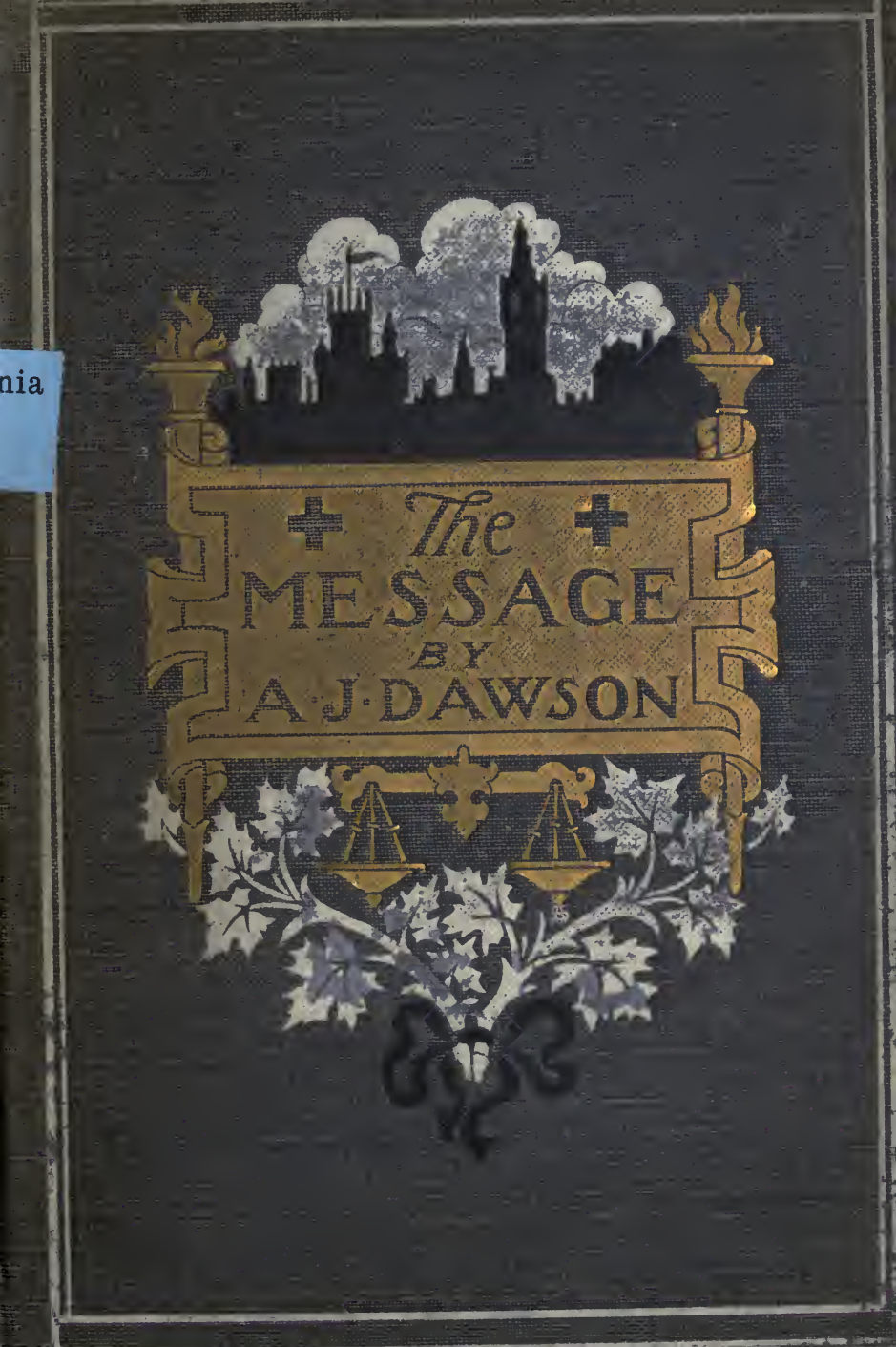
The
MESSAGE
BY
A·J·DAWSON

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THE MESSAGE

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"I saw that Queen of Ancient Britons at the Head of Her Wild, Shaggy Legions" (*See page* 233)

The Message

By A. J. DAWSON

Author of "Hidden Manna," "African Nights Entertainments," "Daniel Whyte," "God's Foundling," "Ronald Kestrel," etc.

Illustrated from Color Sketches
By H. M. BROCK

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PART I

THE DESCENT

Non his juventus orta parentibus infecit aequor sanguine
Punico. — HORACE.

THE MESSAGE

I

IN THE MAKING

"Such as I am, sir — no great subject for a boaster, I admit — you see in me a product of my time, sir, and of very worthy parents, I assure you." — EZEKIEL JOY.

AS a very small lad, at home in Tarn Regis, I had but one close chum, George Stairs, and he went off with his father to Canada, while I was away for my first term at Elstree school. Then came Rugby, where I had several friends, but the chief of them was Leslie Wheeler. Just why we should have been close friends I cannot say, but I fancy it was mainly because Leslie was such a handsome fellow, and always seemed to cut a good figure in everything he did; while I, on the other hand, excelled in nothing, and was not brilliant even in the expression of my discontent, which was tolerably comprehensive. Withal, in other matters beside discontent, I was a good deal of an extremist, and by no means lacking in enthusiasm.

My father, too, was an enthusiast in his quiet way. His was the enthusiasm of the student, and his work as historian and archæologist absorbed, I must sup-

pose, a great deal more of his interest and energy than was ever given to his cure of souls. He was rector of Tarn Regis, in Dorset, before I was born, and at the time of his death, to be present at which I was called away in the middle of the last term of my third year at Cambridge. I was to have spent four years at the University; but, as the event proved, I never returned there after my hurried departure, three days prior to my father's death.

The personal tie between my father and those among whom he lived and worked was not a very close or intimate bond. His contribution to the Cambridge History was greatly appreciated by scholars, and his archæological research won him the respect and esteem of his peers in that branch of study. But I cannot pretend that his loss was keenly felt by his parishioners, with most of whom his relations had been strictly professional rather than personal. A good man and true, without a trace of anything sordid or self-seeking in his nature, my father was yet singularly indifferent to everything connected with the daily lives and welfare of his fellow creatures.

In this he was typical of a considerable section of the country clergy of the time. I knew colleagues of his who were more pronounced examples of the type. One in particular I call to mind (whose living was in the gift of a Cambridge college, like my father's), who, though a good fellow and a clean-lived gentleman, was no more a Christian than he was a Buddhist — less, upon the whole. Among scholarly folk he made not the slightest pretence of regarding the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith in the light

of anything more serious than interesting historical myths, notable sections in the mosaic of folk-lore, which it was his pride and delight to study and understand.

Such men as A— R— and my father (and there were many like them, and more who shared their aloofness while lacking half their virtues) lived hard-working, studious lives, in which the common kinds of self-indulgence played but a very small part. Honourable, kindly at heart, gentle, rarely consciously selfish, these worthy men never gave a thought to the current affairs of their country, to their own part as citizens, or to the daily lives of their fellow countrymen. Indeed, they exhibited a kind of gentle intolerance and contempt in all topical concerns; and though they preached religion and drew stipends as expounders of Christianity, they no more thought of "prying" or "interfering," as they would have said, into the actual lives and hearts and minds of those about them, than of thrusting their hands into their parishioners' pockets.

Stated in this bald way the thing may sound incredible, but those whose recollections carry them back to the opening years of the century will bear me out in saying that this was far from being either the most distressing or the most remarkable among the outworkings of what was then extolled as a broad spirit of tolerance. Our "tolerance," our vaunted "cosmopolitanism," were far more dangerous factors of our national life, had we but known it, than either the insularity of our sturdy forbears or the strength of our enemies had ever been.

Even my dear mother did not, I think, feel the shock of her bereavement so much as might have been supposed. One may say, without disrespect, that the loss of my father gave point and justification to my mother's attitude toward life. Kind, gentle soul that she was, my mother was afflicted with what might be called the worrying temperament; a disposition characteristic of that troublous time. My memory seems to fasten upon the matter of domestic labour as representing the crux and centre of my dear mother's grievances and topics of lament prior to my father's death. The subject may seem to border upon the ridiculous, as an influence upon one's general point of view; but at that time it was really more tragic than farcical, and I know that what was called "the servant question" — as such it was gravely treated in books and papers, and even by leader-writers and lecturers — formed the basis of a great deal of my mother's conversation, just as I am sure that it coloured her outlook upon life, and strengthened her tendency to worry over everything, from the wear-and-tear of house-linen to the morality of the people. All this was incomprehensible and absurd to my father, though, had he but thought of it, it was really more human than his own attitude; for certainly my mother was interested and concerned in the daily lives of her fellow creatures, though not in a cheering or illuminating manner perhaps.

But, as I say, the deprecatory, worrying attitude had become second nature with my mother long years before her widowhood, and had lined and seamed her poor forehead and silvered her hair before my Rugby

days were over. Bereavement merely gave point to a mood already well established.

That I should not return to Cambridge was decided as a matter of course within the week of my father's funeral, when we learned that the little he had left behind him would not even pay for the dilapidations of the rectory. There was practically nothing, when my father's affairs were put in order, beyond my mother's little property, a recent legacy, the investment of which in Canadian railway stocks brought in about a hundred and fifty a year.

Thus I found myself confronted with a sufficiently serious situation for a young man whose training so far had no more fitted him for taking part in any particular division of the battle of life, where the prize sought is an income, than for the administration of the planet Mars. Rugby was better than some of the great public schools in this respect, for a lad with definite purposes and ambitions, but its curriculum had far less bearing upon the working life of the age than it had upon its games and pastimes and the affairs of nations and peoples long since passed away. Yet Rugby belonged to a group of schools that were admittedly the best, and certainly the most outrageously costly, of the educational establishments of the period.

I think my sister Lucy was more shocked than any one else by the death of our father. I say shocked, because I am not certain whether or not the word grieved would apply accurately. For one thing, Lucy had never before seen any dead person. Neither had I, for that matter; but Lucy was more affected

by the actual presence in the house of Death, than I was. Twice a day for years she had kissed our father's forehead. Now and again she had sat upon the arm of his chair and stroked his thin hair. These demonstrations were connected, I believe, with the quest of favours — permission, money, and so forth; but doubtless affection played a part in them.

As for Lucy's home life, a little conversation I recall on the occasion of her driving me to the station when I was leaving for what proved my last term at Cambridge, seems to me to throw some light. I had but recently learned of Lucy's engagement to marry Doctor Woodthrop, of Davenham Minster, our nearest market-town. I had found Woodthrop a decent fellow enough, but thirty-four as against Lucy's twenty-one, inclining ominously to corpulence, and as flatly prosaic and unadventurous a spirit as a small country town could produce. Now, as Lucy seemed to me to have hankerings in the direction of social pleasures and the like, with a penchant for brilliancy and daring, I was a little puzzled about her engagement, for Woodthrop was one who kept a few conversational pleasantries on hand, as a man keeps old pipes on a rack, for periodical use at suitable times.

"So you are actually going to be married, Loo?" I said.

"Oh, well, engaged, Dick," she replied, with a little blush.

"With a view, I presume. Then I suppose it follows that you are in love — h'm?"

"Why, Dick, what a cross-examiner you are!" The blush increased.

"Well, my dear girl, surely it's a natural assumption, is it not?"

"Oh, I suppose so. But ——"

"Yes?"

"Well, I don't think in real life it's the same thing that you read about in novels, do you, Dick?"

"What? Being in love?"

"Yes."

"Well, perhaps not; but I imagine it ought to be something pretty pronounced, you know, even in such a pale reflection of the novels as real life. I gather that it ought to be; seriously, Loo, I think it ought to be. I suppose you do love Woodthrop, don't you?"

My sister looked a little distressed, and I half-regretted having put so direct a question. I was sufficiently the product of my day to be terribly afraid of any kind of interference with my fellow creatures. Our apotheosis of individual liberty had made any such action anathema, "bad form," a sin more resented in the sinner than cowardice or dishonesty, or than any kind of wickedness which was strictly personal and, as you might say, self-contained. Our one object of universal reverence and respect was the personal equation.

"There, Loo," I said, "I didn't mean to tease you." Thus, in accordance with my traditions, I brushed aside and apologized for my natural interest in her well-being in the same way that my poor father and his like brushed away all matters of topical import, and the average man of the period brushed aside all concern with his fellow men, all responsibility for the common weal.

"No," she said, "I know you didn't. And, indeed, Dick, I suppose I don't love Herbert as well as I ought; but — but, Dick, you don't know what it is to be a girl. You can go off to Cambridge, and presently you will go out into the world and live your own life in your own way. But it's different for me, Dick. A girl is not supposed to want to live her own life; she is just part of the home, and the home ——. Well, Dick, you know father's life, and mother — poor mother —— "

"Yes," I said, "that's so."

"Well, Dick, I'm afraid it seems pretty selfish, but I do want to live my own way, and I do get terribly tired of — of —— "

"Of the 'servant question,' for instance."

"Exactly."

"And you think you can live your own life with Woodthrop? "

"Why, I think he is very kind and good, Dick, and he says there's no reason why I shouldn't hunt, if I can manage with one mount, and we can have friends of mine to stay, and — and so on."

"Yes, I see. You will be mistress of a house."

"And, of course, I like him very much, Dick; he really is good."

"Yes."

That was how Lucy felt about her marriage. There seemed to me to be a good deal lacking; but then I was rather given to concentrating my attention upon flaws and gaps. And when I was next at home, at the time of my father's death, I could not help feeling that the engagement was something to be

thankful for. A hundred and fifty a year would mean a good deal of pinching for my mother alone, as things went then; but for mother and Lucy together it would have been painfully short commons. Life, even in the country, was an expensive business at that time despite the current worship of cheapness and of "free" trade, as our Quixotic fiscal policy was called. The sum total of our wants and fancied wants had been climbing steadily, while our individual capability in domestic and other simple matters had been on the decline for a long while.

In the end we decided that my mother and Lucy should establish themselves in apartments on the outskirts of Davenham Minster, which apartments would serve my mother permanently, with the relinquishment of a single room after Lucy's marriage. I saw them both established, gathered my few personal belongings in a trunk and a couple of bags, and started for London on a brilliantly fine morning toward the end of June.

At that time a young man went to London as a matter of course, when launching out for himself. It was not that folk liked living in the huge city (though, curiously enough, many did), but they gravitated toward it because the great aim, always, and in those conditions necessarily, was to make money. There was more money "knocking about," so people said, in London than anywhere else; so that was the place for which one made.

I started for London with a capital of precisely eleven guineas over and above my railway fare — and left it again on the same day.

II

AT THE WATER'S EDGE

"Now a little before them, there was on the left-hand of the Road, a Meadow, and a Stile to go over into it, and that Meadow is called By-Path-Meadow." — *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

MY friend, Leslie Wheeler, had left Cambridge a few months before my summons home, in order to enter his father's office in Moorgate Street. His father was of the mysteriously named tribe of "financial agents," and had evidently found it a profitable calling.

As I never understood anything of even the nomenclature of finance, I will not attempt to describe the business into which my friend had been absorbed; but I remember that it afforded occupation for dozens of gentlemenly young fellows, the correctness of whose *coiffure* and general appearance was beyond praise. These beautifully groomed young gentlemen sat upon high stools at desks of great brilliancy. They used an ingenious arrangement of foolscap paper to protect their shirt-cuffs from contact with baser things, and one of the reasons for the evident care lavished upon the disposition of their hair may have been the fact that they made it a point of honour to go hatless when taking the air or out upon business during the day. Their general appearance and deportment in the office and outside always conveyed to me the

suggestion that they were persons of some wealth and infinite leisure; but I have been assured that they were hard-working clerks, whose salaries, even in these simpler days, would not be deemed extravagant. These salaries, I have been told, worked out at an average of perhaps £120 or £130 a year.

Now London meant no more to me at that time than a place where, upon rare occasions, one dined in splendour, went to a huge and gilded music-hall, cultivated a bad headache, and presently sought to ease it by eating a nightmarish supper, and eating it against time. My allowance at Cambridge had, no doubt fortunately for my digestion, allowed of but few excursions to the capital; but my friend Wheeler lived within twenty miles of it, and I figured him already burgeoning as a magnate of Moorgate Street. Therefore I had of course written to him of my proposed descent upon the metropolis, and had been very kindly invited to spend a week at his father's house in Weybridge before doing anything else. Accordingly then, having reached Waterloo by a fast train, I left most of my effects in the cloak-room there, and taking only one bag, journeyed down to Weybridge.

My friend welcomed me in person in the hall of his father's big and rather showy house, he having returned from the City earlier than usual for that express purpose. I had already met his mother and two sisters upon four separate occasions at Cambridge. Indeed, I may say that I had almost corresponded with Leslie's second sister, Sylvia. At all events, we had exchanged half a dozen letters, and I had even

begged, and obtained, a photograph. At Cambridge I thought I had detected in this delicately pretty, soft-spoken girl, some sympathy and fellow-feeling in the matter of my own crude gropings toward a philosophy of life. You may be sure I did not phrase it in that way then. The theories upon which my discontent with the prevailing order of things was based, seemed to me then both strong and practical; a little ahead of my time perhaps, but far from crude or unformed. As I see it now, my creed was rather a protest against indifference, a demand for some measure of activity in social economy. That my muse was socialistic seems to me now to have been mainly accidental, but so it was, and its nutriment had been drawn largely from such sources as Carpenter's *Civilization: its Cause and Cure,* in addition to the standard works of the Socialist leaders.

It is quite possible that one of the reasons of my continued friendship with Leslie Wheeler was the fact that, in his agreeable manner, he represented in person much of the butterfly indifference to what I considered the serious problems of life, against which my fulminations were apt to be directed. I may have clung to him instinctively as a wholesome corrective. At all events, he submitted, in the main good-humouredly, to my frequently personal diatribes, and, by his very complaisance and merry indifference, supplied me again and again with point and illustration for my sermons.

Leslie's elder sister, Marjory, was his counterpart in petticoats; merry, frivolous, irresponsible, devoted to the chase of pleasure, and obdurately bent upon

sparing neither thought nor energy over other interests; denying their very existence indeed, or good-humouredly ridiculing them when they were forced upon her. She was a very handsome girl; I was conscious of that; but, perhaps because I could not challenge her as I did her brother, her character made no appeal to me. But Sylvia, on the other hand, with her big, spiritual-looking eyes, transparently fair skin, and earnest, even rapt expression; Sylvia stirred my adolescence pretty deeply, and was assiduously draped by me in that cloth of gold and rose-leaves which every young man is apt to weave from out of his own inner consciousness for the persons of those representatives of the opposite sex in whom he detects sympathy and responsiveness.

Mrs. Wheeler spoke in a kind and motherly way of my bereavement, and the generosity of youth somehow prevented my appreciation of this being dulled by the fact that, until reminded, she had forgotten whether I had lost a father or a mother. Indeed, though not greatly interested in other folk's affairs, I believe that while the good soul's eyes rested upon the supposed sufferer, or his story, she was sincerely sorry about any kind of trouble, from her pug's asthma to the annihilation of a multitude in warfare or disaster. She had the kindest heart, and no doubt it was rather her misfortune than her fault that she could not clearly realize any circumstance or situation which did not impinge in some way upon her own small circle.

I met Leslie's father for the first time at dinner that evening. One could hardly have imagined him sparing time for visits to Cambridge. He was a fine,

soldierly-looking man, with no trace of City pallor in his well-shaven, purple cheeks. Purple is hardly the word. The ground was crimson, I think, and over that there was spread a delicate tracery, a sort of netted film, of some kind of blue. The eyes had a glaze over them, but were bright and searching. The nose was a salient feature, having about it a strong predatory suggestion. The forehead was low, surmounted by exquisitely smooth iron-gray hair. Mr. Wheeler was scrupulously fine in dress, and used a single eye-glass. He gave me hearty welcome, and I prefer to think that the apparent chilling of his attitude to me after he had learned of my financial circumstances was merely the creation of some morbid vein of hyper-sensitiveness in myself.

At all events, we were all very jolly together that evening, and I went happily to bed, after what I thought a hint of responsive pressure in my handshake with Sylvia, and several entertaining anecdotes from Mr. Wheeler as to the manner in which fortunes had been made in the purlieus of Throgmorton Street. Launching oneself upon a prosperous career in London seemed an agreeably easy process at the end of that first evening in the Wheeler's home, and the butterfly attitude toward life appeared upon the whole less wholly blameworthy than before. What a graceful fellow Leslie was, and how suave and genial the father when he sat at the head of his table toying with a glass of port! And these were capable men, too, men of affairs. Doubtless their earnestness was strong enough below the surface, I thought — for that night.

III

AN INTERLUDE

" To observations which ourselves we make,
We grow more partial for th' observer's sake." — POPE.

THOUGH in no sense unfriendly or lacking in sympathy, I noticed that Leslie Wheeler showed no inclination to be drawn into intimate discussion of my prospects. I was not inclined to blame my friend for this, but told myself that he probably acted upon paternal instructions. For me, however, it was impossible to lay aside for long, thoughts regarding my immediate future. I was aware that a nest-egg of eleven or twelve pounds was not a very substantial barrier between oneself and want. Mr. Wheeler told no more stories of fortunes built out of nothing in the City, but he did take occasion to refer casually to the fact that City men did not greatly care for the products of public schools and universities, as employees.

I was more than half-inclined to ask why, in this case, Leslie had been sent to Rugby and Cambridge, but decided to avoid the personal application of his remark. It was, after all, no more than the expression of a commonly accepted view, striking though it seems as a comment upon the educational system of the period, when one remembers the huge proportion of the middle and upper-class populace which was ab-

sorbed by commercial callings of one kind or another.

There was practically no demand for physical prowess or aptitude, outside the field of sport and games, nor even for those qualities which are best served by a good physical training. One need not, therefore, be greatly surprised that the public schools should have given no physical training outside games, and that even of the most perfunctory character, the majority qualifying as interested spectators merely, of the prowess of the minority. But it certainly is remarkable, that no practical business training, nor studies of a sort calculated to be of use in later business training, should have been given in the schools most favoured by those for whom business was a life's calling. In this, as in so many other matters, I suppose we were guided and directed entirely by habit and tradition; the line of least resistance.

When I talked of my prospects with handsome Leslie Wheeler — his was his father's face, unblemished and unworn — our conversation was always three parts jocular, at all events upon his side. I was to recast society and mould our social system anew by means of my pen, and of journalism. I was to provide "the poor blessed poor" with hot-buttered rolls and devilled kidneys for breakfast, said Leslie, and introduce old-age pensions for every British workman who survived his twenty-first birthday.

I would not be understood to suggest that this sort of facetiousness indicated the average attitude of the period with regard to the horrible fact that the country contained millions of people permanently in a

state of want and privation. But it was a quite possible attitude then. Such people as my friend could never have mocked the sufferings of an individual. But with regard to the state of affairs, the pitiful millions, as an abstract proposition, indifference was the rule, a tone of light cynicism was customary, and "the poor we have always with us," quoted with a deprecatory shrug, was an accepted conversational refuge, even among such people as the clergy and charitable workers.

And this, if one comes to think of it, was inevitable. The life and habits and general attitude of the period would have been absolutely impossible, in conjunction with any serious face-to-face consideration of a situation which embraced, for example, such preposterously contradictory elements as these:

The existence of huge and growing armies of absolutely unemployed men; the insistence of the populace, and particularly the business people, upon the disbandment of regiments, and upon great naval and military reductions, involving further unemployment; the voting of considerable sums for distribution among the unemployed; violent opposition to the mere suggestion of State aid to enable the unemployed of England to migrate to those parts of the Empire which actually needed their labour; the increasing difficulty of the problem which was wrapped up in the question of "What to do with our sons"; the absolute refusal of the nation to admit of universal military service; the successive closing by tariff of one foreign market after another against British manufactures, and the hysterical refusal of

the people to protect their own markets from what was graphically called the "dumping" into them of the surplus products of other peoples.

It is a queer catalogue, with a ring of insanity about it; but these were the merest commonplaces of life at that time, and the man who rebelled against them was a crank. My friend Leslie's attitude was natural enough, therefore; and, with a few exceptions, it was my own, for, curiously enough, the political school I favoured was, root and branch, opposed to the only possible remedies for this situation. Liberals, Radicals, Socialists, and the majority of those who arrogated to themselves the title of Social Reformers; these were the people who insisted, if not upon the actual evils and sufferings indicated in this illustrative note of social contradictions, then upon violent opposition to their complements in the way of mitigation and relief. And I was keenly of their number.

Many of these matters I discussed, or perhaps I should say, dilated upon, in conversation with Sylvia, while her brother and father were in London. We would begin with racquets in the tennis-court, and end late for some meal, after long wanderings among the pines. And in Sylvia, as it seemed to me, I found the most delightfully intelligent responsiveness, as well as sympathy. My knowledge of feminine nature, its extraordinary gifts of emotional and personal intuition, was of the scantiest, if it had any existence at all. But my own emotional side was active, and my mind an inchoate mass of ideals and more or less sentimental longings for social betterment. And so,

with Sylvia's gentle acquiescence, I rearranged the world.

Much I have forgotten, and am thus spared the humiliation of recounting. But, as an example of what I recall, I remember a conversation which arose from our passing a miniature rifle-range which some local resident — "Some pompous Jingo of retrogressive tendencies," I called him — had erected with a view to tempting young Weybridge into marksmanship; a tolerably forlorn prospect at that time.

"Is it not pathetic," I said, "in twentieth-century England, to see such blatant attacks upon progress as that?"

Sylvia nodded gravely; sweetly sympathetic understanding, as I saw it. And, after all, why not? Understanding of my poor bubbling mind, anyhow, and — Nature's furnishing of young women's minds is a mighty subtle business, not very much more clearly understood to-day than in the era of knight-errantry.

Sylvia nodded gravely, as I spurned the turf by the range.

"Here we are surrounded by quagmires of poverty, injustice, social anomalies, and human distress, and this poor soul — a rich pork-butcher, angling for the favours of a moribund political party, I dare say — lavishes heaven knows how many pounds over an arrangement by which young men are to be taught how to kill each other with neatness and despatch at a distance of half a mile! It is more tragical than farcical. It is enough to make one despair of one's fellow countrymen, with their silly bombast about

'Empire,' and their childish waving of flags. 'Empire,' indeed; God save the mark! And our own little country groaning, women and children wailing, for some measure of common-sense internal reform!"

"It is dreadful, dreadful," said Sylvia. My heart leapt out to meet the gentle goodness of her. "But still, I suppose there must be soldiers," she added. Of course, this touched me off as a spark applied to tinder.

"But that is just the whole crux of the absurdity, and as long as so unreal a notion is cherished we can never be freed from the slavery of these huge armaments. Soldiers are only necessary if war is necessary, and war can only be necessary while men are savages. The differences between masters and men are far more vital and personal than the differences between nations; yet they have long passed the crude stage of thirsting for each other's destruction as a means of settling quarrels. War is a relic of barbarous days. So long as armies are maintained, unscrupulous politicians will wage war. If we, who call ourselves the greatest nation in Christendom, would even deserve the credit of plain honesty, we must put away savagery, and substitute boards of arbitration for armies and navies."

"Yes, I see," said Sylvia, her face alight with interest, "I feel that must be the true, the Christian view. But suppose the other nations would not agree to arbitration?"

"But there is not a doubt they would. Can you suppose that any people are so insensate as really to

like war, carnage, slaughter, for their own sake, when peaceful alternatives are offered?"

"No, I suppose not; and, indeed, I feel that all you say is true, Mr. Mordan."

"Please don't say 'Mr. Mordan,' Sylvia. Even your mother and sister call me Dick. No, no, the other nations would be only too glad to follow our lead, and we, as the greatest Power, should take that lead. What could their soldiers do to a soldierless people, anyhow; and even if we lost at the beginning, why, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Of what use is the dominion of a huge, unwieldy empire when even a tiny country like this is so administered that a quarter of its population live always on the verge of starvation? Let the Empire go, let Army and Navy go, let us concentrate our energies upon the arts of peace, science, education, the betterment of the conditions of life among the poor, the right division of the land among those that will till it. Let us do that, and the world would have something to thank us for, and we should soon hear the last of these noisy, ranting idiots who are eternally waving flags like lunatics and mouthing absurd phrases about imperialism and patriotism, national destiny, and rubbish of that sort. Our duty is to humanity, and not to any decayed symbols of feudalism. The talk of patriotism and imperialism is a gigantic fraud, and the tyranny of it makes our names hated throughout the world. We have no right to enforce our sway upon the peace-loving farmers and the ignorant blacks of South Africa. They rightly hate us for it, and so do the millions

of India, upon whom our yoke is held by armies of soldiers who have to be maintained by their victims. It casts one down to think of it, just as the sight of those ridiculous rifle-butts and the thought of the diseased sentiment behind them depresses one."

"It all seems very mad and wrong, but — but I wish you would not take it so much to heart," said Sylvia.

"That is very sweet of you," I told her; "and, indeed, there is not so much real cause to be downhearted. The last elections showed clearly enough that the majority of our people are alive to all this. The leaven of enlightenment is working strongly among the people, and the old tyranny of Jingoism is dying fast. One sees it in a hundred ways. Boer independence has as warm friends in our Parliament as on the veld. The rising movements of internationalism, of Pan-Islam, the Swadeshi movement, the rising toward freedom in India; all these are largely directed from Westminster. The Jingo sentiment toward Germany, a really progressive nation, full of natural and healthy ambitions, is being swept away by our own statesmen; by their courteous and friendly attitude toward the Kaiser, who delights to honour our present Minister of War. Also, the work of disarmament has begun. The naval estimates are being steadily pruned, and whole regiments have been finally disbanded. And all this comes from within. So you see we have some grounds for hopefulness. It is a great step forward, for our own elected leaders to show the enthusiastic and determined opposition they are showing to the old brutal pretentions of

England to sway the world by brute strength. But, forgive me! Perhaps I tire you with all this — Sylvia."

"No, no, indeed you don't — Dick, I — I think it is beautiful. It — it seems to make everything bigger, more kind and good. It interests me, immensely."

And I knew perfectly well that I had not tired her — wearisome though the recital of it all may be now. For I knew instinctively how the personal note told in the whole matter. I had been really heated, and perfectly sincere, but a kind of subconscious cunning had led me to utilize the heat of the moment in introducing between us, for example, the use of first names. Well I knew that I was not wearying Sylvia. But coldly recited now, I admit the rhodomontade to be exceedingly tiresome. My excuse for it is that it serves to indicate the sort of ideas that were abroad at the time, the sort of sentiments which were shaping our destiny.

After all, I was an educated youth. Many of my hot statements, too, were of fact, and not merely of opinion and feeling. It is a fact that the sentiment called anti-British had come to be served more slavishly in England than in any foreign land. The duration of our disastrous war in South Africa was positively doubled, as the result of British influence, by Boer hopes pinned upon the deliberate utterances of British politicians. In Egypt, South Africa, India, and other parts of the Empire, all opposition to British rule, all risings, attacks upon our prestige, and the like, were aided, and in many cases fomented, steered, and brought to a successful issue — not by

Germans or other foreigners, but by Englishmen, and by Englishmen who had sworn allegiance at St. Stephens. It is no more than a bare statement of fact to say that, in the very year of my arrival in London, the party which ruled the State was a party whose members openly avowed and boasted of their opposition to British dominion, and that in terms, not less, but far more sweeping than mine in talking to Sylvia among the pines at Weybridge.

But if Sylvia appreciated and sympathized in the matter of my sermonizing, the rest of the family neither approved the sermons nor Sylvia's interest in them. I was made to feel in various ways that no import must be attached to my attentions to Sylvia. Marjory began to shadow her sister in the daytime, and, as she was frankly rather bored by me, I could not but detect the parental will in this.

Then with regard to my social and political views, Mr. Wheeler joined with his son in openly deriding them. In Leslie's case the thing never went beyond friendly banter. Leslie had no political opinions; he laughed joyously at the mere notion of bothering his head about such matters for a moment. And, in his way, he represented an enormous section of the younger generation of Englishmen in this. The father, on the other hand, was equally typical of his class and generation. This was how he talked to me over his port: —

"I tell you what it is, you know, Mordan; you're a regular firebrand, you know; by Jove, you are; an out-and-out Socialistic Radical: that's what you are. By gad, sir, I don't mince my words. I consider that

— er — opinions like yours are a danger to the country; I do, indeed; a danger to the country, and — er — to the — to the Empire. I do, by gad. And as for your notions about disarmament and that, why, even if our army reductions are justifiable, which, upon my word, I very much doubt, it's ridiculous to suppose we can afford to cut down our Navy. No, sir, the British Navy is Britain's safeguard, and it ought not to be tampered with. I'm an out-and-out Imperialist myself, and — er — I can tell you I have no patience with your Little Englandism."

I am not at all sure whether the class Mr. Wheeler belonged to was not almost the most dangerous class of all. The recent elections showed this class to be a minority. Of course, this section had its strong men, but that it also included a large number of men like Leslie's father was a fact — a fact which yielded pitiful evidence of its weakness. These men called themselves "out-and-out Imperialists," and had not a notion of even the meaning of the word they used. Still less had they any notion of accepting any rôle which involved the bearing of responsibilities, the discharge of civic and national duties.

Mr. Wheeler's aim in life was to make money and to enjoy himself. He would never have exercised his right to vote if voting had involved postponing dinner. He liked to talk of the British Empire, but he did not even know precisely of what countries it consisted, and I think he would cheerfully have handed Canada to France, Australia to Germany, India to Russia, and South Africa to the Boers, if by so doing he could have escaped the paying of income-tax.

On Sunday night, my last night at Weybridge, I walked home from church alone with Sylvia. Marjory was in bed with a sore throat, and whatever their notions as to my undesirability, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Wheeler were inclined to attend evening service. Leslie was not home from golf at Byfleet. We were late for dinner, Sylvia and I, and during our walk she promised to write to me regularly, and I promised many things, and suggested many things, and was only deterred from actual declaration by the thought of the poor little sum which stood between me and actual want.

Next morning I went up to town with Leslie and his father to open my campaign in London. As a first step toward procuring work, I was to present a letter of introduction from a Cambridge friend to the editor of the *Daily Gazette*. After that, as Leslie said, I was to " reform England inside out."

IV

THE LAUNCHING

"O Friend ! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest
To think that now our life is only drest
For show ; mean handi-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom ! — We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest ;
The wealthiest man among us is the best ;
No grandeur now in Nature or in book
Delight us. . . ." — WORDSWORTH.

LOOKING back now upon that lonely launch of mine in London, I see a very curious and sombre picture. In the living I am sure there must have been mitigations, and light as well as shade. In the retrospect it seems one long disillusion. I see myself, and the few folk with whom my relations were intimate, struggling like ants across a grimy stage, in the midst of an inferno of noise, confusion, pointless turmoil, squalor, and ultimate cataclysm. The whole picture is lurid, superhuman in its chaotic gloom; but in the living, I know there were gleams of sunlight. The tragic muddle of that period was so monstrous, that even we who lived through it are apt in retrospect to see only the gloom and confusion. It is natural, therefore, that those who did not live through it should be utterly unable to discern any glimpse of

relief in the picture. And that leads to misconception.

As a fact, I found very much to admire in London when I sallied forth from the obscure lodging I had chosen in a Bloomsbury back street, on the morning which brought an end to my stay with the Wheelers at Weybridge. Also, it was not given to me at that time to recognize as such one tithe of the madness and badness of the state of affairs. Some wholly bad features were quite good in my eyes then.

London still clung to its " season," as it was called, though motor-cars and railway facilities had entirely robbed this of its sharply defined nineteenth-century limits. Very many people, even among the wealthy, lived entirely in London, spending their week-ends in this or that country or seaside resort, and devoting the last months of summer with, in many cases, the first months of autumn, to holiday-making on the Continent, or in Scotland, or on the English moors or coasts.

The London season was not over when I reached town, and in the western residential quarters the sun shone brightly upon many-coloured awnings and beautiful decorative plants and flowers. The annual rents paid by people who lived behind these flowers and awnings frequently ran into thousands of pounds, with ten shillings in each pound additional by way of rates and taxes. To live at all, in this strata, would cost a man and his wife perhaps eighty to a hundred pounds a week, without anything which would have been called extravagance.

Hundreds of people who lived in this way had

neighbours within a hundred yards of their front doors who never had enough to eat. Even such people as these had to pay preposterous rents for the privilege of huddling together in a single wretched room. But many of their wealthy neighbours spent hundreds, and even thousands of pounds a year over securing comfort and happiness for such domestic animals as horses, dogs, cats, and the like. Amiable, kindly gentlefolk they were, with tender hearts and ready sympathies. Most of them were interested in some form of charity. Many of them specialized, and these would devote much energy to opposing the work of other charitable specialists. Lady So-and-so, who advocated this panacea, found herself bitterly opposed by Sir So-and-so, who wanted all sufferers to be made to take his nostrum in his special way. Then sometimes poor Lady So-and-so would throw up her panacea in a huff, and concentrate her energies upon the work of some society for converting Jews, who did not want to be converted, or for supplying red flannel petticoats for South Sea Island girls, who infinitely preferred cotton shifts and floral wreaths. Even these futile charities were permitted to overlap one another to a bewilderingly wasteful extent.

But the two saddest aspects of the whole gigantic muddle so far as charitable work went, were undoubtedly these: The fact that much of it went to produce a class of men and women who would not do any kind of work because they found that by judicious sponging they could live and obtain alcohol and tobacco in idleness; and the fact that where charitable endeavour infringed upon vested interests, licit or

illicit, it was savagely opposed by the persons interested.

The discipline of the national schools was slack, intermittent, and of short reach. There was positively no duty to the State which a youth was bound to observe. Broadly, it might be said that at that time discipline simply did not enter at all into the life of the poor of the towns, and charity of every conceivable and inconceivable kind did enter into it at every turn.

The police service was excellent and crime exceedingly difficult of accomplishment. The inevitable result was the evolution in the towns of a class of men and women, but more especially of men, who, though compact of criminal instincts of every kind, yet committed no offence against criminal law. They committed nothing. They simply lived, drinking to excess when possible, determined upon one point only: that they never would do anything which could possibly be called work. It is obvious that among such people the sense of duty either to themselves, to each other, or to the State, was merely non-existent.

London had long since earned the reputation of being the most charitable city in the world. Its share in the production of an immense loafer class formed one sad aspect of London's charity when I first came to know the city. Another was the opposition of vested interests — the opposition of the individual to the welfare of the mass. One found it everywhere. An instance I call to mind (it happened to be brought sharply home to me) struck at the root of the terribly rapid production of degenerates, by virtue of its rela-

tion to pauper children — that is, the children to whom the State, through its boards of guardians, stood in the light of parents, because their natural parents were dead, or in prison, or in lunatic asylums, or hopelessly far gone in the state of criminal inactivity which qualified so many for all three estates.

Huge institutions were built at great expense for the accommodation of these little unfortunates. Here they were housed in the most costly manner, the whole work of the establishment being carried on by a highly paid staff of servants and officials. The children were not allowed to do anything at all, beyond the learning by rote of various theories which there was no likelihood of their ever being able to apply to any reality of life with which they would come in contact.

They listened to lectures on the making of dainty dishes in the best style of French cookery, and in many cases they never saw a box of matches. They learned to repeat poetry as parrots might, but did not know the difference between shavings and raw coffee. They learned vague smatterings of Roman history, but did not know how to clean their boots or brush their hair. It was as though experts had been called upon to devise a scheme whereby children might be reared into their teens without knowing that they were alive or where they lived, and this with the greatest possible outlay of money per child. Then, at a given age, these children were put outside the massive gates of the institutions and told to run away and become good citizens.

It followed as a matter of course that most of them

fell steadily and rapidly into the pit; the place occupied by the criminally inactive, the "public-house props." So they returned poor, heavy-laden creatures, by way of charity, to the institutions of the "rates," thus completing the vicious circle of life forced upon them by an incredibly wrong-headed, topsyturvy administration.

For the maintenance of this vicious circle enormous sums of public money were required. Failing such vast expenditure, Nature unaided would have righted matters to some extent, and the Poor Law guardians would have become by so much the less wielders of power and influence, dispensers of public money. Some of these Poor Law guardians gave up more or less honest trades to take to Poor Law guardianship as a business; and they waxed fat upon it.

Every now and again came disclosures. Guardians were shown to have paid ten shillings a score for such and such a commodity this year, and next year to have refused a tender for the supply of the same article at 9s. 8d. a score, in favour of the tender of a relative or protégé of one of their number at 109s. 8d. a score. I remember the newspapers showing up such cases as these during the week of my arrival in London. The public read and shrugged shoulders.

"Rascally thieves, these guardians," said the Public; and straightway forgot the whole business in the rush of its own crazy race for money.

"But," cried the Reformer to the Public, "this is really your business. It is your duty as citizens to stop this infamous traffic. Don't you see how you yourselves are being robbed?"

You must picture our British Public of the day as a flushed, excited man, hurrying wildly along in pursuit of two phantoms — money and pleasure. These he desired to grasp for himself, and he was being furiously jostled by millions of his fellows, each one of whom desired just the same thing, and nothing else. Faintly, amidst the frantic turmoil, came the warning voices in the wilderness:

"This is your business. It is your duty as citizens," etc.

Over his shoulder, our poor possessed Public would fling his answer:

"Leave me alone. I haven't time to attend to it. I'm too busy. You mustn't interrupt me. Why the deuce don't the Government see to it? Lot of rascals! Don't bother me. I represent commerce, and, whatever you do, you must not in any way interfere with the Freedom of Trade."

The band of the reformers was considerable, embracing as it did the better, braver sort of statesmen, soldiers, sailors, clergy, authors, journalists, sociologists, and the whole brotherhood of earnest thinkers. But the din and confusion was frightful, the pace at which the million lived was terrific; and, after all, the cries of the reformers all meant the same thing, the one thing the great, sweating public was determined not to hear, and not to act on. They all meant:

"Step out from your race a moment. Your duties are here. You are passing them all by. Come to your duties."

It was like a Moslem call to prayer; but, alas! it was directed at a people who had sloughed all pre-

tensions to be ranked among those who respond to such calls, to any calls which would distract them from their objective in the pelting pursuit of money and pleasure.

But I am digressing — the one vice which, unfortunately for us, we never indulged or condoned at the time of my arrival in London. I wanted to give an instance of that aspect of charity and attempted social reform which aroused the opposition of vested interests and chartered brigands in the great money hunt. It was this: A certain charitable lady gave some years of her life to the study of those conditions in which, as I have said, the criminally inactive, the hopelessly useless, were produced by authorized routine, at a ruinous cost in money and degeneracy, and to the great profit of an unscrupulous few.

This lady then gave some further years, not to mention money, influence, and energy, to the evolution of a scheme by which these pauper children could really be made good and independent citizens, and that at an all-round cost of about one-fifth of the price of the guardians' method for converting them into human wrecks and permanent charges upon the State. The wise practicability of this lady's system was admitted by independent experts, and denied by nobody. But it was swept aside and crushed, beaten down with vicious, angry thoroughness, in one quarter — the quarter of vested interest and authority; quietly, passively discouraged in various other quarters; and generally ignored, as another interrupting duty call, by the rushing public.

Here, then, were three kinds of opposition — the

first active and deadly, the other two passive and fatal, because they withheld needed support. The reason of the first, the guardians' opposition, was frankly and shamelessly admitted in London at the time of my arrival there. The guardians said:

"This scheme would reduce the rates. We want more rates. It would reduce the amount of money at our disposal. We aim at increasing that. It would divert certain streams of cash from our own channel into other channels in other parts of the Empire. We won't have it." But their words were far less civil and more heated than these, though the sense of them was as I have said.

The quiet, passive opposition was that of other workers in charity and reform. They said in effect:

"Yes, the scheme is all right — an excellent scheme. But why do you take it upon yourself to bring it forward in this direct manner? Are you not aware of the existence of our B—— nostrum for pauper children, or our C—— specific for juvenile emigration? Your scheme, admirable as it is, ignores both these, and therefore you must really excuse us if we —— Quite so! But, of course, as co-workers in the good cause, we wish you well ——", and so forth.

The opposition of the general public I have explained. It was not really opposition. It was simply a part of the disease of the period; the dropsical, fatty degeneration of a people. But the mere fact that the reformers sent forth their cries and still laboured beside the public's crowded race-course; that such people as the lady I have mentioned existed —

and there were many like her — should show that London as I found it was not all shadow and gloom, as it seems when one looks back upon it from the clear light of better days.

The darkness, the confusion, and the din, were not easy to see and hear through then. From this distance they are more impenetrable; but I know the light did break through continually in places, and good men and women held wide the windows of their consciousness to welcome it, striving their utmost to carry it into the thick of the fight. Many broke their hearts in the effort; but there were others, and those who fell had successors. The heart of our race never was of the stuff that can be broken. It was the strongest thing in all that tumultuous world of my youth, and I recall now the outstanding figures of men already gray and bowed by long lives of strenuous endeavour, who yet fought without pause at this time on the side of those who strove to check the mad, blind flight of the people.

London, as I entered it, was a battle-field; the perverse waste of human energy and life was frightful; but it was not quite the unredeemed chaos which it seems as we look back upon it.

Even in the red centre of the stampede (Fleet Street is within the City boundaries) men in the race took time for the exercise of human kindliness, when opportunity was brought close enough to them. The letter I took to the editor of the *Daily Gazette* was from an old friend of his who knew, and told him, of my exact circumstances. This gentleman received me kindly and courteously. He and his like were among

the most furiously hurried in the race, but their handling of great masses of diffuse information gave them, in many cases, a wide outlook, and where, as often happened, they were well balanced as well as honest, I think they served their age as truly as any of their contemporaries, and with more effect than most.

This gentleman talked to me for ten minutes, during which time he learned most of all there was to know about my little journalistic and debating experience at Cambridge, and the general trend of my views and purposes. I do not think he particularly desired my services; but, on the other hand, I was not an absolute ignoramus. I had written for publication; I had enthusiasm; and there was my Cambridge friend's letter.

"Well, Mr. Mordan," he said, turning toward a table littered deep with papers, and cumbered with telephones and bells, "I cannot offer you anything very brilliant at the moment; but I see no reason why you should not make a niche for yourself. We all have to do that, you know — or drop out to make way for others. You probably know that in Fleet Street, more perhaps than elsewhere, the race is to the swift. There are no reserved seats. The best I can do for you now is to enter you on the reporting staff. It is stretching a point somewhat to make the pay fifty shillings a week for a beginning. That is the best I can do. Would you care to take that?"

"Certainly," I told him; "and I'm very much obliged to you for the chance."

"Right. Then you might come in to-morrow. I

will arrange with the news-editor. And now ——" He looked up, and I took my hat. Then he looked down again, as though seeking something on the floor. "Well, I think that's all. Of course, it rests with you to make your own place, or — or lose it. I sympathize with what you have told me of your views — of course. You know the policy of the paper. But you must remember that running a newspaper is a complex business. One's methods cannot always be direct. Life is made up of compromises, and — er — at times a turn to the left is the shortest way to the right — er — Good night!"

Thus I was given my chance within a few hours of my descent upon the great roaring City. I was spared much. Even then I knew by hearsay, as I subsequently learned for myself, that hundreds of men of far wider experience and greater ability than mine were wearily tramping London's pavements at that moment, longing, questing bitterly for work that would bring them half the small salary I was to earn.

I wrote to Sylvia that night, from my little room among the cat-infested chimney-pots of Bloomsbury; and I am sure my letter did not suggest that London was a very gloomy place. My hopes ran high.

THE ROARING CITY

V

A JOURNALIST'S EQUIPMENT

". . . Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
Plain living and high thinking are no more :
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws."

WORDSWORTH.

ACTING on the instructions I had received overnight, I presented myself at the office of the *Daily Gazette* in good time on the morning after my interview with the editor. A pert boy showed me into the news-editor's room, after an interval of waiting, and I found myself confronting the man who controlled my immediate destiny. He was dictating telegrams to a shorthand writer, and, for the moment, took no notice whatever of me. I stood at the end of his table, hat in hand, wondering how so young-looking a man came to be occupying his chair.

He looked about my age, but was a few years older. His face was as smooth as the head of a new axe, and had something else chopper-like about it. He reminded me of pictures I had seen in the advertisement pages of American magazines; pictures showing a wedge-like human face, from the lips of which some such an assertion as "It's *you* I want!" was supposed

to be issuing. I subsequently learned that this Mr. Charles N. Pierce had spent several years in New York, and that he was credited with having largely increased the circulation of the *Daily Gazette* since taking over his present position. He suddenly raised the even, mechanical tone in which he dictated, and snapped out the words:

"Right. Get on with those now, and come back in five minutes."

Then he switched his gaze on to me, like a search-light.

"Mr. Mordan, I believe?"

I admitted the charge with my best smile. Mr. Pierce ignored the smile, and said:

"University man?"

Accepting his cue as to brevity, I said: "Yes. Corpus Christi, Cambridge."

He pursed his thin lips. "Ah well," he said, "you'll get over that."

In his way he was perfectly right; but his way was as coldly offensive as any I had ever met with.

"Well, Mr. Mordan, I've only three things to say. Reports for this paper must be sound English; they must be live stories; they must be short. You might ask a boy to show you the reporters' room. You'll get your assignment presently. As a day man, you'll be here from ten to six. That's all."

And his blade of a face descended into the heart of a sheaf of papers. As I reached the door the blade rose again, to emit a kind of thin bark:

"Ah!"

I turned on my heel, waiting.

"Do you know anything about spelling?"

I tried to look pleasant, as I said I thought I was to be relied on in this.

"Well, ask my secretary for tickets for the meeting at Memorial Hall to-day; something to do with spelling. Don't do more than thirty or forty lines. Right."

And the blade fell once more, leaving me free to make my escape, which I did with a considerable sense of relief. I found the secretary a meek little clerk, with a curious hidden vein of timid facetiousness. He supplied me with the necessary ticket and a hand-bill of particulars. Then he said:

"Mr. Pierce is quite bright and pleasant this morning."

"Oh, is he?" I said.

"Yes, very — for him. He's all right, you know, when you get into his way. Of course, he's a real hustler — cleverest journalist in London, they say."

"Really!" I think I introduced the right note of admiration. At all events, it seemed to please this little pale-eyed rabbit of a man, who, as I found later, was reverentially devoted to his bullying chief, and positively took a kind of fearful joy in being more savagely browbeaten by Pierce than any other man in the building. A queer taste, but a fortunate one for a man in his particular position.

For myself, I was at once repelled and gagged by Pierce's manner. I believe the man had ability, though I think this was a good deal overrated by himself, and by others, at his dictation; and I dare say he was a good enough fellow at heart. His

manner was aggressive and feverish enough to be called a symptom of the disease of the period. If the blood in his veins sang any song at all to Mr. Pierce, the refrain of that song must have been, "Hurry, hurry, hurry!" He and his like never stopped to ask "Whither?" or "Why?" They had not time. And further, if pressed for reasons, destination, and so forth, they would have admitted, to themselves at all events, that there could be no other goal than success; and that success could mean no other thing than the acquisition of money; and that the man who thought otherwise must be a fool — a fool who would soon drop out altogether, to go under, among those who were broken by the way.

My general aim and purpose in journalistic work, at the outset, was the serving of social reform in everything that I did. As I saw it, society was in a parlous state indeed, and needed awaking to recognition of the fact, to the crying need for reforms in every direction. That attitude was justifiable enough in all conscience. The trouble was that I was at fault, first, in my diagnosis; second, in my notions as to what kind of remedies were required; and third, as to the application of those remedies.

Like the rest of the minority whose thoughts were not entirely occupied by the pursuit of pleasure and personal gain, I saw that the greatest obstacle in the path of the reformer was public indifference. But with regard to the causes of that indifference, I was entirely astray. I clung still to the nineteenth-century attitude, which had been justifiable enough during a good portion of that century, but had absolutely

ceased to be justifiable before its end came. This was the attitude of demanding the introduction of reforms from above, from the State.

Though I fancied myself in advance of my time in thought, when I joined the staff of the *Daily Gazette*, I really was essentially of it. Even my obscure work as reporter very soon brought me into close contact with some of the dreadful sores which disfigured the body social and politic at that time. But do you think they taught me anything? No more than they taught the blindest racer after money in all London. They moved me, moved me deeply; they stirred the very foundations of my being; for I was far from being insensitive. But not even in the most glaringly obvious detail did they move me in the right direction. They merely filled me with resentment, and a passionate desire to bring improvement, aid, betterment; a desire to force the authorities into some action. Never once did it occur to me that the movement must come from the people themselves.

Poverty, though frequently a dreadful complication, was far from being at the root of all the sores. The average respectable working-class wage-earner with a wife and family, who earned from 25s. to 35s. or 40s. a week, would spend a quarter of that wage upon his own drinking; thereby not alone making saving for a rainy day impossible, but docking his family of some of the real necessities of life. But this was accepted as a matter of course. The man wanted the beer; he must have it. The State made absolutely no demand whatever upon such a man. But it did for him and his, more than he did for him-

self and his family. And, giving positively nothing to the State, he complainingly demanded yet more from it.

These were respectable men. A large number of men spent a half, and even three-quarters of their earnings in drink. The middle class spent proportionately far less on liquor, and far more upon display of one kind and another; they seldom denied themselves anything which they could possibly obtain. The rich, as a class, lived in and for indulgence, in some cases refined and subtle, in others gross; but always indulgence. The sense of duty to the State simply did not exist as an attribute of any class, but only here and there in individuals.

I believe I am strictly correct in saying that in half a century, while the population increased by seventy-five per cent., lunacy had increased by two hundred and fifty per cent.

Yet the majority rushed blindly on, paying no heed to any other thing on earth than their own gratification, their own pursuit of the money for the purchase of pleasure. One of the tragic fallacies of the period was this crazy notion that not alone pleasure, but happiness, could be bought with money, and in no other way. And the few who were stung by the prevailing suffering and wretchedness into recognition of our parlous state, we, for the most part, cherished my wild delusion, and insisted that the trouble could be remedied if the State would contract and discharge new obligations. We clamoured for more rights, more help, more liberty, more freedom from this and that; never seeing that our trouble was our incom-

plete comprehension of the rights and privileges we had, with their corresponding obligations.

Though I knew them not, and as a *Daily Gazette* reporter was little likely to meet them, there were men who strove to open the eyes of the people to the truth, and strove most valiantly. I call to mind a great statesman and a great general, both old men, a great pro-consul, a great poet and writer, a great editor, and here and there politicians with elements of greatness in them, who fought hard for the right. But these men were lonely figures as yet, and I am bound to say of the people's leaders generally, at the time of my journalistic enterprise, that they were a poor, truckling, uninspired lot of sheep, with a few clever wolves among them, who saw the people's madness and folly and preyed upon it masterfully by every trick within the scope of their ingenuity.

Even those who were honourable, disinterested, and, for such a period, unselfish, were for the most part the disciples of tradition and the slaves of that life-sapping curse of British politics: the party spirit, which led otherwise honourable men to oppose with all their strength the measures of their party opponents, even in the face of their country's dire need.

Then there was the anti-British faction, a party which spread fast-growing shoots from out the then Government's very heart and root. The Government's half-hearted supporters were not anti-British, but they were not readers of the *Daily Gazette;* they were not, in short, whole-hearted Government supporters. They were Whigs, as the saying went. My party, the readers of the *Gazette,* the out-and-out

Government party, to whom I looked for real progress, real social reform; they were unquestionably riddled through and through with this extraordinary sentiment which I call anti-British, a difficult thing to explain nowadays.

With the newly and too easily acquired rights and liberties of the nineteenth century, with its universal spread of education, cheap literature, and the like, there came, of course, increased knowledge, a wider outlook. No discipline came with it, and one of its earliest products was a nervous dread of being thought behind the time, of being called ignorant, narrow-minded, insular. People would do anything to avoid this. They went to the length of interlarding their speech and writings with foreign words often in ignorance of the meaning of those words. Broad-minded, catholic, tolerant, cosmopolitan — those were the descriptive adjectives which all desired to earn for themselves. It became a perfect mania, particularly with the young and clever, the half-educated, the would-be " smart " folk.

But it was also the honest ambition of many very worthy people, who truly desired broad-minded understanding and the avoidance of prejudice. This sapped the bulldog qualities of British pluck and persistence terribly. You can see at a glance how it would shut out a budding Nelson or a Wellington. But its most notable effect was to be seen among politicians, who were able to claim Fox for a precedent.

To believe in the superiority of the British became vulgar, a proof of narrow-mindedness. But, by that token, to enlarge upon the inferiority of the British

indicated a broad, tolerant spirit, and a wide outlook upon mankind and affairs. From that to the sentiment I have called anti-British was no more than a step. Many thoroughly good, honourable, benevolent people took that step unwittingly, and all unconsciously became permeated with the vicious, suicidal sentiment, while really seeking only good. Such people were saved by their natural goodness and sense from becoming actual and purposeful enemies of their country. But as "Little Englanders" — so they were called — they managed, with the best intentions, to do their country infinite harm.

But there were others, the naturally vicious and unscrupulous, the morbid, the craven, the ignorant, the self-seeking; these were the dangerous exponents of the sentiment. With them, Little Englandism progressed in this wise: "There are plenty of foreigners just as good as the British; their rule abroad is just as good as ours." Then: "There are plenty of foreigners far better than the British; their rule abroad is better than ours." Then: "Let the people of our Empire fend for themselves among other peoples; our business is to look after ourselves." Then: "We oppose the people of the Empire; we oppose British rule; we oppose the British." From that to "We befriend the enemies of the British" was less than a step. It was the position openly occupied by many, in and out of Parliament.

"We are for you, for the people; and devil take Flag, Empire, and Crown!" said these ranters; drunken upon liberties they never understood, free-

dom they never earned, privileges they were not qualified to hold.

There were persons among them who spat upon the Flag that protected their worthless lives, and cut it down; sworn servants of the State who openly proclaimed their sympathy with the State's enemies; carefully protected, highly privileged subjects of the Crown, who impishly slashed at England's robes, to show her nakedness to England's foes.

And these were supporters, members, protégés of the Government, and readers of the *Daily Gazette*, upheld in all things by that organ. And I, the son of an English gentleman and clergyman, graduate of an English university, I looked to this party, the Liberal Government of England, as the leaders of reform, of progress, of social betterment. And so did the country; the British public. Errors of taste and judgment we regretted. That was how we described the most ribald outbursts of the anti-British sentiment.

It is hard to find excuse or palliation. Instinct must have told us that the demands, the programme, of such diseased creatures, could only aggravate the national ills instead of healing them. Yes, it would seem so. I can only say that comparatively few among us did see it. Perhaps disease was too general among us for the recognition of symptoms.

This then was the mental attitude with which I approached my duties as a reporter on the staff of a London daily newspaper of old standing and good progressive traditions. And my notion was that in every line written for publication, the end of social reform should be served, directly or indirectly. My

idea of attaining social reformation was that the people must be taught, urged, spurred into extracting further gifts from the State; that the public must be shown how to make their lives easier by getting the State to do more for them. That was as much as my education and my expansive theorizing had done for me. Assuredly I was a product of my age.

I had forgotten one thing, however, and that was the thing which Mr. Charles N. Pierce began now to drill into me, by analogy, and with a good deal more precision and directness than I had ever seen used at Rugby or Cambridge. This one thing was that the *Daily Gazette* was not a philanthropic organ, but a people's paper; and that the people did not want instructing but interesting.

"But," I pleaded, "surely, for their own sakes, in their own interests ——"

"Damn their own sakes!"

"Well, but ——"

"There's no 'but' about it. The public is an aggregation of individuals. This paper must interest the individual. The individual doesn't care a damn about the people. He cares about himself. He is very busy making money, and when he opens his paper he wants to be amused and interested; and he is not either interested or amused by any instruction as to how the people may be served. He doesn't want 'em served. He wants himself served and amused. That's your job."

I believe I had faint inclinations just then to wonder whether, after all, there might not be some-

thing to be said for the bloated Tories: the opponents of progress, as I always considered them. My thoughts ran on parties, in the old-fashioned style, you see. Also I was thinking, as a journalist, of the characteristics which distinguished different newspapers.

I cordially hated Mr. Charles N. Pierce, but he really had more discernment than I had, for he said:

"Don't you worry about teaching the people to grab more from the State. They'll take fast enough; they'll take quite as much as is good for 'em, without your assistance. But, for giving, the angel Gabriel and two advertisement canvassers wouldn't make 'em give a cent more than they're obliged."

VI

A JOURNALIST'S SURROUNDINGS

"Religion crowns the statesman and the man,
Sole source of public and of private peace." — YOUNG.

I AM bound to suppose that I must have been a tolerably tiring person to have to do with during my first year in London. The reason of this was that I could never concentrate my thoughts upon intimate, personal interests, either my own or those of the people I met. My thoughts were never of persons, but always of the people; never of affairs, but always of tendencies, movements, issues, ultimate ends. Probably my crude unrest would have made me tiresome to any people. It must have been peculiarly irritating to my contemporaries at that period, who, whatever they may have lacked, assuredly possessed in a remarkable degree the faculty of concentration upon their own individual affairs, their personal part in the race for personal gain.

I remember that I talked, even to the poor, overworked servant at my lodging, rather of the prospects of her class and order than of anything more intimate or within her narrow scope. Poor Bessie! She was of the callously named tribe of lodging-house "slaveys"; and what gave me some interest in her personality, apart from the type she repre-

sented, was the fact that she had come from the Vale of Blackmore, a part of Dorset which I knew very well. I even remembered, for its exceptional picturesqueness and beauty of situation, the cottage in which Bessie had passed her life until one year before my arrival at the fourth-rate Bloomsbury "apartments" house in which she now toiled for a living. There was little enough of the sap of her native valley left in Bessie's cheeks now. She had acquired the London muddiness of complexion quickly, poor child, in the semi-subterranean life she led.

I was moved to inquire as to what had led her to come to London, and gathered that she had been anxious to "see a bit o' life." Certainly she saw life, of a kind, when she entered her horrible underground kitchen of a morning, for, as a chance errand once showed me, its floor was a moving carpet of black-beetles until after the gas was lighted. In Bloomsbury, Bessie's daily work began about six o'clock — there were four stories in the house, and coals and food and water required upon every floor — and ended some seventeen hours later. Occasionally, an exacting lodger would make it eighteen hours — the number of Bessie's years in the world — but seventeen was the normal.

The trains which every day came rushing in from the country to the various railway termini of London were almost past counting. The "rural exodus," as it was called, was a sadly real movement then. Every one of them brought at least one Bessie, and one of her male counterparts, with ruddy cheeks, a tin box, and bright eyes straining to "see life." Insatiable

London drew them all into its maw, and, while sapping the roses from their cheeks, enslaved many of them under one of the greatest curses of that day: the fascination of the streets.

So terrible a power was exercised by this unwholesome passion that men and women became paralyzed by it, and incapable of plucking up courage enough to enable them to leave the streets. I talked with men — poor, sodden creatures, whose greasy black coats were buttoned to their stubbly chins to hide the absence of collar and waistcoat — who supported a wretched existence in the streets, between begging, stealing, opening cab-doors, and the like, in constant dread of police attention. Among these I found many who had refused again and again offers of help to lead an honest, self-dependent life, for the sole reason that these offers involved quitting the streets.

The same creeping paralysis of the streets kept men from emigration to parts of the Empire in which independent prosperity was assured for the willing worker. They would not leave the hiving streets, with their chances, their flaunting vice, their incessant bustle, and their innumerable drinking bars.

The disease did not stop at endowing the streets with fascination for these poor, undisciplined, unmanned creatures; it implanted in them a lively fear, hard to comprehend, but very real to them, of all places outside the streets, with their familiar, pent noises and enclosed strife.

I met one old gentleman, the head of an important firm of printers, who, being impressed with the squalid

wretchedness of the surroundings in which his work-people lived, decided to shift his works into the country. He chose the outskirts of a charmingly situated garden city, then in course of formation. He gave his people a holiday and entertained them at a picnic party upon the site of his proposed new works. He set before them plans and details of pleasant cottages he meant to build for them, with good gardens, and scores of conveniences which they could never know in the dingy, grimy tenements for which they paid extortionate rents in London.

There were four hundred and thirty-eight of these work-people. Twenty-seven of them, with some hesitation, expressed their willingness to enter into the new scheme for their benefit. The remaining four hundred and eleven refused positively to leave their warrens in London for this garden city, situated within an hour's run of the metropolis.

Figure to yourself the attitude of such people, where the great open uplands of the Empire were concerned: the prairie, the veld, the bush. Consider their relation to the elements, or to things elemental. We went farther than "Little Englandism" in those days; we produced little street and alley men by the hundred thousand; and then we bade them exercise their rights, their imperial heritage, and rule an Empire. As for me, I was busy in my newspaper work trying to secure more rights for them; for men whose present freedom from all discipline and control was their curse.

The reporters' room at the office of the *Daily Gazette* was the working headquarters of five other men

besides myself. One was a Cambridge man, one had been at Oxford, one came from Cork, and the other two were products of Scotch schools. Two of the five would have been called gentlemen; four of them were good fellows; the fifth had his good points, but perhaps he had been soured by a hard upbringing. One felt that the desire for money — advancement, success, or whatever you chose to call it; it all meant the one thing to Dunbar — mastered every feeling, every instinct even, in this young man, and made him about as safe and agreeable a neighbour as a wolf might be for a kennel of dogs.

A certain part of our time was devoted to waiting in the reporters' room for what Mr. Pierce called our "assignments," to this or that reporting task. Also, we did our writing here, and a prodigious amount of talking. The talk was largely of Fleet Street, the ruffianism of Mr. Pierce, the fortunes of our own and other journals, the poorness of our pay, the arduousness of our labours, the affairs of other newspaper offices, and the like. But at other times we turned to politics, and over our pipes and copy paper would readjust the concert of Europe and the balance of world power. More often we dealt with local politics, party intrigue, and scandals of Parliament; and sometimes — more frequently since my advent, it may be — we entered gaily upon large abstractions, and ventilated our little philosophies and views of the eternal verities.

By my recollection of those queer confused days, my colleagues were cynically anarchical in their political views, unconvinced and unconvincing Socialists,

and indifferent Agnostics. I am not quite sure that we believed in anything very thoroughly — except that things were in a pretty bad way. Earnest belief in anything was not a feature of the period. I recall one occasion when consideration of some tyrannical act of our immediate chief, the news-editor, led our talk by way of character and morality to questions of religion. The *Daily Gazette*, I should mention, was a favourite organ with the most powerful religious community — the Nonconformists. Campbell, one of the two Scotch reporters, hazarded the first remark about religion, if I remember aright: something it was to the effect that men like Pierce had neither religion nor manners. Brown, the Cambridge man, took this up.

"Well now," he said, "that's a queer thing about religion. I'd like you to tell me what anybody's religion is in London."

"It's the capital of a Christian country, isn't it?" said Dunbar.

"Yes," admitted Brown. "That's just it. We're officially and politically Christian. It's a national affair. We're a Christian people; but who knows a Christian individual? Ours is a Christian newspaper, Christian city, Christian country, and all the rest of it. There's no doubt about it. All England believes; but no single man I ever meet admits that he believes. I suppose it's different up your way, Campbell. One gathers the Scotch are religious?"

"H'm! I won't answer for that," growled Campbell. "As a people, yes, as you say; but as indi-

viduals — well, I don't know. But my father's a believer; I could swear to it."

"Ah, yes; so's mine. But I'm not talking of fathers. I mean our generation."

"Well," I began, "for my part, I'm not so sure of the fathers."

"Oh, we can count you out," said Kelly, the Irishman. "All parsons' sons are atheists, as a matter of course; and bad hats at that."

"Rather a severe blow at our Christianity, isn't it?" said Brown.

I had no more to say on this point, not wishing to discuss my father. But I knew perfectly well that that good, kind man had cherished no belief whatever in many of what were judged to be the vital dogmas of Christianity.

"Well, I've just been thinking," said Campbell, "and upon my soul, Brown — if I've got one — I believe you're right. I don't know any one of our generation who believes. Every one thinks every one else believes, and everybody is most careful not to be disrespectful about the belief everybody else is supposed to hold. But, begad, nobody believes himself. We all wink at each other about it; accepting the certainty of every one else's belief, and only recognizing as a matter of course that you and me — we've got beyond that sort of thing."

"Well, I've often thought of it," said Brown. "I'll write an article about it one of these days."

"Who'll you get to publish it?"

"H'm! Yes, that's a fact. And yet, hang it,

you know, how absurd! Who is there in this office that believes? "

"Echo answers, 'who?'"

"I happen to know that both Rainham and Baddeley go to church," said Dunbar, naming a proprietor and a manager.

"I don't see the connection," said Brown.

"Because there isn't any," said Campbell. "But Dunbar sees it, and so does the British public, begad. That's the kernel of the whole thing. That's why every one thinks every one else, except himself, believes. Rainham and Baddeley think their wives, and sons, and servants, and circle generally believe, and therefore would be shocked if Rainham and Baddeley didn't go to church. And every one else thinks the same. So they all go."

"But, my dear chap, they don't all go. The parsons are always complaining about it. The women do, but the men don't — not as a rule, I mean; particularly when they've got motors, and golf, and things. You know they don't. Here's six of us here. Does any one of us ever go to church? "

Dunbar, looking straight down over his nose, said: "I do — often."

"You're a fine fellow, Dunbar, sure enough," said Campbell; "and I believe you'll be a newspaper proprietor in five years. You've got your finger on the pulse. Can you look me in the face and say you believe? "

Dunbar smiled in his knowing way and wobbled. "I certainly believe it's a good thing to go to church occasionally," he said.

"And I believe you'll make a fortune in Fleet Street, my son."

"Well, in my humble opinion," said Kelly, "the trouble with you people in England is not so much that you don't believe; a good many believe, in a kind of a way, like they believe in ventilation, without troubling to act on it. They believe, but they don't think about it; they don't care, it isn't real. The poor beggars 'ld go crazy with fear of hell-fire, if the sort of armchair belief they have was real to 'em. It isn't real to 'em, like business, and money, and that, or like patriotism is in Japan."

"Well, it really is a rum thing," said Brown, with an affectation of pathos, "that in all this Christian country I shouldn't know a single believer of my generation."

"It's a devilish bad thing for the country," said Campbell. And even then, with all my fundamentally rotten sociological nostrums, I had a vague feeling that the Scotchman was right there.

"Well, then, that's why it's good to go to church," said Dunbar, with an air of finality.

"I still don't see the connection," murmured Brown.

"Because it still isn't there. But, of course, it's perfectly obvious. That's why Dunbar sees it, and why he'll presently run a paper." Then Campbell turned to Dunbar, and added slowly, as though speaking to a little child: "You see, my dear, it's not their not going to church that's bad; it's their not believing."

If I remember rightly, Mr. Pierce ended the con-

versation, through his telephone, by assigning to Brown the task of reporting a clerical gathering at Exeter Hall. Brown was credited with having a particularly happy touch in the reporting of religious meetings. He certainly had an open mind, for I remember his saying that day that he thought Christianity was perhaps better adapted to a skittish climate like ours than Buddhism, and that Ju-Ju worship in London would be sure to cause friction with the County Council.

As I see it now, there was a terribly large amount of truth in the view taken by Brown and Campbell and Kelly about belief in England, and more particularly in London. But there were devout men of all ages who did not happen to come within their circle of acquaintance. I met Salvation Army officers occasionally, who were both intelligent, self-denying, and hard-working; and I suppose that with them belief must have been at least as powerful a motive as devotion to their Army, their General, and the work of reclamation among the very poor. Also, there were High Church clergymen, who toiled unceasingly among the poor. Symbolism was a great force with them; but there must have been real belief there. Also, there were some fine Nonconformist missions. I recall one in West London, the work of which was a great power for good in such infected warrens as Soho. But it certainly was not an age of faith or of earnest beliefs. The vast majority took their Christianity, with the national safety and integrity, for granted — a thing long since established

by an earlier generation; a matter about which no modern could spare time for thought or effort.

I believe it was on the day following this particular conversation in the reporters' room that I met Leslie Wheeler by appointment at Waterloo, and went down to Weybridge with him for the week-end. My friend was in even gayer spirits than usual, and laughingly told me that I must "Work up a better Saturday face than that" before we got to Weybridge.

I had known Leslie Wheeler since our school-days; and I remember lying awake in the room next his own at Weybridge that night, and wondering why in the world it was I felt so out of touch with my high-spirited friend. During that Saturday afternoon and evening I had been pretty much preoccupied in securing as much as possible of Sylvia's attention. But the journey down had been made with Leslie alone, and when his father had gone to bed, we two had spent another half-hour together in the billiard-room, smoking and sipping whiskey and soda. Leslie was in the vein most usual with him, of "turning to mirth all things on earth"; and I was conscious, upon my side, of a notable absence of reciprocal feeling, of friendly rapport. And I could find no explanation for this, as I lay thinking of it in bed.

Looking backward, I see many causes which probably contributed to my feeling of lost touch. I had only been about a month in London, but it had been a busy month, and full of new experiences, of intimate touch with realities of London life, sordid and otherwise. It was all very unlike Rugby and Cam-

bridge; very unlike the life of the big luxurious Weybridge house, and even more unlike lichen-covered Tarn Regis. In those days I took little stock of such mundane details as bed and board. But these things count; I had been made to take note of them of late.

I paid 12s. 6d. a week for my garret, and 7s. a week for my breakfast, 1s. for lighting, and 1s. for my bath. That left me with 28s. 6d. a week for daily lunch and dinner, clothes, boots, tobacco, and the eternal penny outgoings of London life. The purchase of such a trifle as a box of sweets for Sylvia made a week's margin look very small. Already I had begun to note the expensiveness of stamps, laundry work, omnibus fares, and such matters. My training had not been a hopeful one, so far as small economies went. Leslie twitted me with neglecting golf, and failing to attend the Inter-'Varsity cricket match. He found economy, like all other things under heaven, and in heaven for that matter, suitable subjects for the exercise of his tireless humour. But I wondered greatly that his incessant banter should jar upon me; that I should catch myself regarding him with a coldly appraising eye. Indeed, it troubled me a good deal; and the more so when I thought of Sylvia.

I flatly declined to admit that London had affected my feeling for Sylvia. Whatever one's view, her big violet eyes were abrim with gentle sympathy. I watched her as I sat by her side in church, and thought of our irreverent talk at the office. Here was sincere piety, at all events, I thought. Mediæ-

valism never produced a sweeter devotee, a worshipper more rapt. I could not follow her into the place of ecstasy she reached. But, I told myself, I could admire from without, and even reverence. Could I? Well, I was somewhat strengthened in the belief that very Sunday night by Sylvia's father.

VII

A GIRL AND HER FAITH

"If faith produce no works, I see
That faith is not a living tree." — HANNAH MORE.

DURING that Sunday at Weybridge I saw but little of my friend Leslie. It was only by having obtained special permission from the *Daily Gazette* office that I was able to remain away from town that day. My leisure was brief, my chances few, I felt; and that seemed to justify the devoting of every possible moment to Sylvia's company.

Sylvia's church was not the family place of worship. When Mrs. Wheeler and Marjory attended service, it was at St. Mark's, but Sylvia made her devotions at St. Jude's, a church famous in that district for its high Anglicanism and stately ritual.

The incumbent of St. Jude's, his Reverence, or Father Hinton, as Sylvia always called him, was a tall, full-bodied man, with flashing dark eyes, and a fine, dramatic presence. I believe he was an indefatigable worker among the poor. I know he had a keen appreciation of the dramatic element in his priestly calling, and in the ritual of his church, with its rich symbolism and elaborate impressiveness. Even from my brief glimpses of the situation, I realized that this priest (the words clergyman and

vicar were discouraged at St. Jude's) played a very important, a vital part, in the scheme of Sylvia's religion. I think Sylvia would have said that the personality of the man was nothing; but she would have added that his office was much, very much to her.

She may have been right, though not entirely so, I think. But it is certain that, in the case of Father Hinton, the dramatic personality of the man did nothing to lessen the magnitude of his office in the minds of such members of his flock as Sylvia. I gathered that belief in the celibacy of the clergy was, if not an article of faith, at least a part of piety at St. Jude's.

Before seven o'clock on Sunday morning I heard footsteps on the gravel under my window, and, looking out, saw Sylvia, book in hand, leaving the house. She was exquisitely dressed, the distinguishing note of her attire being, as always in my eyes, a demure sort of richness and picturesqueness. Never was there another saint so charming in appearance, I thought. Her very Prayer Book, or whatever the volume might be, had a seductive, feminine charm about its dimpled cover.

I hurried over my dressing and was out of the house by half-past seven and on my way to St. Jude's. Breakfast was not until half-past nine, I knew. The morning was brilliantly sunny; and life in the world, despite its drawbacks and complexities, as seen from Fleet Street, seemed an admirably good thing to me as I strode over a carpet of pine-needles, and watched the slanting sun-rays turning the tree trunks to burnished copper.

The service was barely over when I tiptoed into a seat beside the door at St. Jude's. At this period the appurtenances of ritual in such churches as St. Jude's — incense, candles, rich vestments, and the like — rivalled those of Rome itself. I remember that, fresh from the dewy morning sunshine without, these symbols rather jarred upon my senses than otherwise, with a strong hint of artificiality and tawdriness, the suggestion of a theatre seen by daylight. But they meant a great deal to many good folks in Weybridge, for, despite the earliness of the hour, there were fifty or sixty women present, besides Sylvia, and half a dozen men.

I could see Sylvia distinctly from my corner by the door, and I was made rather uneasy by the fact that she remained in her place when every one else had left the building. Five, ten minutes I waited, and then walked softly up the aisle to her place. I did not perceive, until I reached her side, that she was kneeling, or I suppose I should have felt obliged to refrain from disturbing her. As it was, Sylvia heard me, and, having seen who disturbed her, rose, with the gravest little smile, and, with a curtsy to the altar, walked out before me.

I found that Sylvia generally stayed on in the church for the eight o'clock service; and I was duly grateful when she yielded to my solicitations and set out for a walk with me instead. I had taken a few biscuits from the dining-room and eaten them on my way out; but I learned later, rather to my distress, that Sylvia had not broken her fast. I must suppose she was accustomed to such practices, for she seemed

to enjoy almost as much as I did our long ramble in the fresh morning air.

I learned a good deal during that morning walk, and the day that followed it, the greater part of which I spent by Sylvia's side. Upon the whole, I was perturbed and made uneasy; but I continued to assure myself, perhaps too insistently for confidence or comfort, that Sylvia was wholly desirable and sweet. It was perhaps unfortunate for my peace of mind that the day was one of continuous religious exercises. The fact tinged all our converse, and indeed supplied the motive of most of it.

I did not at the time realize exactly what chilled and disturbed me, but I think now that it was what I might call the inhumanity of Sylvia's religion. I dipped into one of her sumptuous little books at some time during the day, and I remember this passage:

"To this end spiritual writers recommend what is called a 'holy indifference' to all created things, including things inanimate, place, time, and the like. Try as far as possible to be indifferent to all things. Remember that the one thing important above all others to you is the salvation of your own soul. It is the great work of your life, far greater than your work as parent, child, husband, wife, or friend."

It was a reputable sort of a book this, and fathered by a respected Oxford cleric.

There was singularly little of the mystic in my temperament. My mind, as you have seen, was surcharged with crude but fervent desires for the material betterment of my kind. I was nothing if not interested in human well-being, material progress,

mortal ills and remedies. Approaching Sylvia's position and outlook from this level then, I thrust my way through what I impatiently dismissed as the "flummery"; by which I meant the poetry, the picturesqueness, the sacrosanct glamour surrounding his Reverence and St. Jude's; and found, or thought I found, that Sylvia's religion was at worst a selfish gratification of the senses of the individual worshipper, and at best a devout and pious ministration to the worshipper's own soul; in which the loving of one's neighbour and caring for one another seemed to play precisely no part at all.

True it was, as I already knew, that in the East End of London, and elsewhere, some of the very High Church clergy were carrying on a work of real devotion among the poor, and that with possibly a more distinguished measure of success than attended the efforts of any other branch of Christian service. They did not influence anything like the number of people who were influenced by dissenting bodies, but those who did come under their sway came without reservation.

But the point which absorbed me was the question of how this particular aspect of religion affected Sylvia. In this, at all events, it seemed to me a far from helpful or wholesome kind of religion. Sylvia liked early morning services because so few people attended them. It was "almost like having the church to oneself." The supreme feature of religious life for Sylvia had for its emblem the tinkle of the bell at the service she always called Mass. The coming of the Presence — that was the C Major

of life for Sylvia. For the rest, meditation, preferably in the setting provided by St. Jude's, with its permanent aroma of incense and its dim lights — the world shut out by stained glass — this, with prayer, genuflections, and the ecstasy of long thought upon the circumstances of the supreme act of Christ's life upon earth, seemed to me to represent the sum total of Sylvia's religion.

But, over and above what was to me the chilling negativeness of all this, its indifference to the human welfare of all other mortals, there was in Sylvia's religion something else, which I find myself unable, even now, to put into words. Some indication of it, perhaps, is given by the little passage I have quoted from one of her books. It was the one thing positive which I found in my lady's religion; all the rest was to me a beautiful, intricate, purely artificial negation of human life and human interest.

This one thing positive struck into my vitals with a chill premonition, as of something unnatural and, to me, unfathomable. It was a sentiment which I can only call anti-human. Even as those of Sylvia's persuasion held that the clergy should be celibate, so it seemed to me they viewed all purely human loves, ties, emotions, sentiments, and interests generally with a kind of jealous suspicion, as influences to be belittled as far as possible, if not actually suppressed.

Puritanism, you say? But, no; the thing had no concern with Puritanism, for it lacked the discipline, the self-restraint that made Cromwell's men invincible. There was no Puritanism in the influence which could make women indifferent to the earthly

ties of love and sentiment, to children, to the home and domesticity, while at the same time implanting in them an almost feverish appreciation of incense, rich vestments, gorgeous decorations, and the whole paraphernalia of such a service as that of St. Jude's, Weybridge. This religion, or, as I think it would be more just to say, Sylvia's conception of this religion, did not say:

"Deny yourself this or that."

It said:

"Deny yourself to the rest of your kind. Deny all other mortals. Wrap yourself in yourself, thinking only of your own soul and its relation to its Maker and Saviour."

This was how I saw Sylvia's religion, and, though she was sweetly kind and sympathetic to me, Dick Mordan, I was strangely chilled and perturbed by realization of the fact that nothing human really weighed with her, unless her own soul was human; that the people, our fellow men and women, of whose situation and welfare I thought so much, were far less to Sylvia than the Early Fathers and the Saints; that humanity had even less import for her, was less real, than to me, was the fascination of St. Jude's incense-laden atmosphere.

Sylvia's dainty person had an infinite charm for me; the personality which animated and informed it chilled and repelled me as it might have been a thing uncanny. When I insisted upon the dear importance of some one of humanity's claims, the far-away gaze of her beautiful eyes, with their light that never was on sea or land, her faintly superior smile

— all this thrust me back, as might a blow, and with more baffling effect.

And then the accidental touch of her little hand would bring me back, with pulses fluttering, and the warm blood in my veins insisting that sweet Sylvia was adorable; that everything would be well lost in payment for the touch of her lips. So, moth-like, I spent that pleasant Sabbath day, attached to Sylvia by ties over which my mind had small control; by bonds which, if the truth were known, were not wholly dissimilar, I believe, from the ties which drew her daily to the heavy atmosphere of the sanctuary rails of St. Jude's.

In the evening Mr. Wheeler asked me to come and smoke a cigar with him in his private room, and the invitation was not one to be evaded. I was subconsciously aware that it elicited a meaning exchange of glances between Marjory and her mother.

"Well, Mordan, I hope things go well with you in Fleet Street," said Mr. Wheeler, when his cigar was alight and we were both seated in his luxurious little den.

"Oh, tolerably," I said. "Of course, I am quite an obscure person there as yet; quite on the lowest rungs, you know."

"Quite so; quite so; and from all I hear, competition is as keen there as in the City, though the rewards are — rather different, of course."

I nodded, and we were silent for a few moments. Then he flicked a little cigar-ash into a tray and looked up sharply, with quite the Moorgate Street expression, I remember thinking.

"I think you are a good deal attracted by my youngest girl, Mordan?" he said; and his tone demanded a reply even more than his words.

"Yes, I certainly admire her greatly," I said, more than a little puzzled by the wording of the question; more than a little fluttered, it may be; for it seemed to me a welcoming sort of question, and I was keenly aware of my ineligibility as a suitor.

"Exactly. That is no more than I expected to hear from you. Indeed, I think anything less would — well, I shouldn't have been at all pleased with anything less."

His complaisance quite startled me. Somehow, too, it reminded me of my many baffled retirements of that day, before the elements in Sylvia's character which chilled and repelled me. I was almost glad that I had not committed myself to any warmer or more definite declaration. Mr. Wheeler weighed his cigar with nice care.

"Yes," he continued. "If you had disputed the attraction — the attachment, I should perhaps say — I should have found serious ground for criticizing your — your behaviour to my girl. As it is, of course, the thing is natural enough. You have been attracted; the child is attractive; and you have paid her marked attentions — which is what any young man might be expected to do."

"If he is going to suggest an engagement," I thought, "I must be very clear about my financial position, or want of position." Mr. Wheeler continued thoughtfully to eye his cigar.

"Yes, it is perfectly natural," he said; "and you

will probably think, therefore, that what I am going to say is very unnatural and unkind. But you must just bear in mind that I am a good deal older than you, and, also, I am Sylvia's father."

I nodded, with a new interest.

"Well, now, Mordan, let me say first that I know my girls pretty well, and I am quite satisfied that Sylvia is not fitted to be a poor man's wife. You would probably think her far better fitted for that part than her sister, because Marjory is a lot more gay and frivolous. Well, you would be wrong. They are neither of them really qualified for the post, but Sylvia is far less so than Marjory. In point of fact she would be wretched in it, she would fail in it; and — I may say that the fact would not make matters easier for her husband."

There did not seem to me any need for a reply, but I nodded again; and Mr. Wheeler resumed, after a long draw at his cigar. He smoked a very excellent, rather rich Havana.

"Yes, girls are different now from the girls I sweethearted with; and girls like mine must have money. I dare say you think Sylvia dresses very prettily, in a simple way. My dear fellow, her laundry bill alone would bankrupt a newspaper reporter."

I may have indicated before, that Mr. Wheeler was not a person of any particular refinement. He had made the money which provided a tolerably costly up-bringing for his children, but his own education I gathered had been of a much more exiguous character. There was, as I know, a good deal of truth in what he said of the girl of the period.

"Well, now, I put it to you, Mordan, whether, admitting that what I say about Sylvia is true — and you may take it from me that it is true — whether it would be very kind or fair on my part to allow you to go on paying attention to her at the rate of — say to-day's. Do you think it would be wise or kind of me to allow it? I say nothing about your side in the matter, because — well, because I still have some recollection of how a young fellow feels in such a case. But would it be wise of me to allow it?"

He was a shrewd man, this father of Sylvia, and of my old friend; and I have no doubt that the tactics I found so disarming had served him well before that day in the City. At the same time, instinct seemed to forbid complete surrender on my side.

"It is just consideration of the present difficulties of my position which has made me careful to avoid seeking to commit Sylvia in any way," I said.

It was probably an unwise remark. At all events, it struck the note of opposition, of contumacy, which it seemed my host had been anticipating; and he met it with a new inflection in his voice, as who should say: "Well, now to be done with explanations and the velvet glove. Have at you!" What he actually said was:

"Ah, there's a deal of mischief to be done without a declaration, my friend. But, however, I don't expect that you should share my view. I only suggested it on the off chance because — well, I suppose, because that would be the easiest way out for me, as host. But I don't know that I should have thought much of you if you had met me half-way. So now

let me do my part and get it over, for it's not very pleasant. I have shown you my reasons, which, however they may seem to you, are undeniable to me. Now for my wishes in the matter, as a father; I am sure there is no need for me to say 'instructions,' so I say 'wishes.' They are simply that for the time — for a year or two, anyhow — you should not give me the pleasure of being your host, and that you should not communicate in any way with Sylvia. There, now it's said, and done, and I think we might leave it at that; for I don't think it's much more pleasant for me than for you. I'm sure I hope we shall have many a pleasant evening together — er — after a few years have passed. Now, what do you say — shall we have another cigar, or go in to the ladies?"

I flatter myself that, with all my short-comings, I was never a sulky fellow. At all events, I elected to join the ladies; but my reward was not immediately apparent, for it seemed that Sylvia had retired for the night. At least, we did not meet again until breakfast-time next morning, when departure was imminent, and the week's work had, so to say, begun.

VIII

A STIRRING WEEK

"Ay! we would each fain drive
At random, and not steer by rule.
Weakness! and worse, weakness bestows in vain.
Winds from our side the unsuiting consort rive.
We rush by coasts where we had lief remain;
Man cannot, though he would, live chance's fool.

. . . . . .

Even so we leave behind,
As, charter'd by some unknown Powers,
We stem across the sea of life by night.
The joys which were not for our use design'd;
The friends to whom we had no natural right,
The homes that were not destined to be ours.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

IT goes without saying that Mr. Wheeler's attitude, and my being practically forbidden the house at Weybridge, strengthened and sharpened my interest in Sylvia. Nothing else so fans the flame of a young man's fancy as being forbidden all access to its object. Accordingly, in the weeks which followed that Sunday at Weybridge, I began an ardent correspondence with Sylvia, after inducing her to arrange to call for letters at a certain newspaper shop not far from the station.

It was a curious correspondence in many ways. Some of my long, wordy epistles were indited from

the reporters' room at the *Daily Gazette* office, in the midst of noisy talk and the hurried production of "copy." Others, again, were produced, long after — for my health's sake — I should have been in bed; and these were written on a corner of my little chest of drawers in the Bloomsbury lodging-house. I was a great reader of the poet Swinburne at the time, and I doubt not my muse was sufficiently passionate seeming. But, though I believe my phrases of endearment were alliteratively emphatic, and even, as I afterwards learned, somewhat alarming to their recipient, yet the real mainspring of my eloquence was the difference between our respective views of life, Sylvia's and mine.

In short, before very long my letters resolved themselves into fiery and vehement denunciation of Sylvia's particular and chosen *metier* in religion, and equally vehement special pleading on behalf of the claims of humanity and social reform, as I saw them. I find the thing provocative of smiles now, but I was terribly in earnest then, or thought so, and had realized nothing of the absolute futility of pitting temperament against temperament, reason against conviction, argument against emotional belief.

We had some stolen meetings, too, in the evenings, I upon one side of a low garden wall, Sylvia upon the other. Stolen meetings are apt to be very sweet and stirring to young blood; but the sordid consideration of the railway fare to Weybridge forbade frequent indulgence, and such was my absorption in social questions, such my growing hatred of Sylvia's anti-human form of religion, that even here I could not

altogether forbear from argument. Indeed, I believe I often left poor Sylvia weary and bewildered by the apparently crushing force of my representations, which, while quite capable of making her pretty head to ache, left her mental and emotional attitude as completely untouched as though I had never opened my lips.

Wrought up by means of my own eloquence, I would make my way back to London in a hot tremor of exaltation, which I took to be love and desire of Sylvia. And then, as like as not, I would receive a letter from my lady-love the next day, the refrain of which would be:

"How strange you are. How you muddle me! Indeed, you don't understand; and neither, perhaps, do I understand you. It seems to me you would drag sacred matters down to the dusty level of your politics."

The dusty level of my politics! That was it. The affairs of the world, of mortal men, they were as the affairs of ants to pretty Sylvia. A lofty and soaring view, you say? Why, no; not that exactly, for what remained of real and vital moment in her mind, to the exclusion of all serious interest in humanity? There remained, as a source of much gratification, what I called the daily dramatic performance at St. Jude's; and there remained as the one study worthy of serious devotion and interest — Sylvia Wheeler's own soul. She never sought to influence the welfare of another person's soul. Indeed, as she so often said to me, with a kind of plaintiveness which should have softened my declamatory ardour but did not, she did not

like speaking of such matters at all; she regarded it as a kind of desecration.

No, it did not seem to me a lofty and inspiring view that Sylvia took. On the contrary, it exercised a choking effect upon me, by reason of what I regarded as its intense littleness and narrowness. The too often bitter and sordid realities of the struggle of life, as I saw it in London, had the effect upon me of making Sylvia's esoteric exclusiveness of interest seem so petty as to be an insult to human intelligence. I would stare out of the train windows, on my way back from Weybridge, at the countless lights, the endless huddled roofs of London; and, seeing in these a representation of the huge populace of the city, I would stretch out my arms in an impotent embrace, muttering:

"Yes, indeed, you *are* real; you *are* more important than any other consideration; you are *not* the mere shadows she thinks you; your service is of more moment than any miracle, or than any nursing of one's own soul!"

And so I would make my way to Fleet Street, where I forced myself to believe I served the people by teaching them to despise patriotism, to give nothing, but to organize and demand, and keep on demanding and obtaining, more and more, from a State whose business it was to give, and to ask nothing in return. I was becoming known, and smiled at mockingly, for my earnest devotion to the extreme of the *Daily Gazette's* policy, which, if it made for anything, made, I suppose, for anti-nationalism, anti-militarism, anti-Imperialism, anti-loyalty, and anti-

everything else except State aid — by which was meant the antithesis of aid of the State.

"I've got quite a good job for you this afternoon, Mordan — something quite in your line," said Mr. Charles N. Pierce one morning. "A lot of these South African firebrands are having a luncheon at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and that fellow John Crondall is to give an address afterwards on 'Imperial Interests and Imperial Duties.' I'll give you your fling on this up to half a column — three-quarters if it's good enough; but, be careful. A sort of contemptuous good humour will be the best line to take. Make 'em ridiculous. And don't forget to convey the idea of the whole business being plutocratic. You know the sort of thing: Park Lane Israelites, scooping millions, at the expense of the overtaxed proletariat in England. Jingoism, a sort of swell bucket-shop business — you know the tone. None of your heroics, mind you. It's got to be news; but you can work in the ridicule all right."

I always think of that luncheon as one of the stepping-stones in my life. However crude and mistaken I had been up till then, I had always been sincere. My report of that function went against my own convictions. The writing of it was a painful business; I knew I was being mean and dishonest. Not that what I heard there changed my views materially. No; I still clung to my general convictions, which fitted the policy of the *Daily Gazette*. But the fact remained that in treating that gathering as I did, on the lines laid down by my news-editor, I knew

that I was being dishonest, that I was conveying an untrue impression.

In this feeling, as in most of a young man's keen feelings, the personal element played a considerable part. I was introduced to the speaker, John Crondall, by a Cambridge man I knew, who came there on behalf of a Conservative paper, which had recently taken a new lease of life in new hands, and become the most powerful among the serious organs of the Empire party. It is a curious thing, by the way, that overwhelming as was the dominance of the anti-national party in politics, the Imperialist party could still claim the support of the greatest and most thoughtfully written newspapers.

John Crondall had no time to spare for more than a very few words with so obscure a person as myself; but in two minutes he was able to produce a deep impression upon me, as he did upon most people who met him. John Crondall had a great deal of personal charm, but the thing about him which bit right into my consciousness that afternoon was his earnest sincerity. As Crewe, the man who introduced me to him, said afterwards:

"There isn't one particle of flummery in Crondall's whole body."

It was an obviously truthful criticism. You might agree with the man or not, but no intelligent human being could doubt his honesty, the reality of his convictions, the strength and sincerity of his devotion to the cause of those convictions. It was perfectly well known then that Crondall had played a capable third or fourth fiddle in the maintenance, so far, of the

Imperial interest in South Africa. His masterful leader, the man who, according to report, had inspired all his fiery earnestness in the Imperialist cause, was dead. But John Crondall had relinquished nothing of his activity as a lieutenant, and continued to spend a good share of his time in South Africa, while, wherever he was, continuing to devote his energies to the same cause.

As for his material interests, Crewe assured me that Crondall knew no more of business, South African or otherwise, than a schoolboy. He had inherited property worth about a couple of thousand a year, and had rather decreased than added to it. For, though he had acted as war correspondent in the Russo-Japan war, and through one or two "little wars," in outlying parts of the British Empire, circumstances had prevented such work being of profit to him. In the South African war he had served as an irregular, and achieved distinction in scouting and guiding work.

John Crondall's life, I gathered, had been the very opposite of my own sheltered progress from Dorset village to school, from school to University, and thence to my present street-bound routine in London. His views were clearly no less opposite to that vague tumult of resentment, protest, and aspiration which represented my own outlook upon life. Indeed, his speech that day was an epitome of the sentiment and opinions which I had chosen to regard with the utmost abhorrence.

With Crondall, every other consideration hinged upon and was subservient to the Imperialist idea of

devotion to the bond which united all British possessions under one rule. The maintenance and furtherance of that tie, the absorption of all parts into that great whole, the subordination of all other interests to this: that I took to be John Crondall's great end in life. By association I had come to identify myself, and my ideals of social reform, entirely with those to whom mere mention of the rest of the Empire, or of the ties which made it an Empire, was as a red rag to a bull.

I have tried to explain something of the causes for this extraordinary attitude, but I am conscious that at the present time it cannot really be explained. It was there, however. We might interest ourselves in talk of Germany, we might enthusiastically admire and even model ourselves upon the conduct of a foreign people; but mention of the outside places of our own Empire filled us with anger, resentment, scorn, and contempt. It amounted to this: that we regarded as an enemy the man who sought to serve the Empire. He cannot do that without opposing us, we said in effect; as one who should say: You cannot cultivate my garden, or repair my fences, without injuring my house and showing yourself an enemy to my family. A strange business; but so it was.

Therefore, John Crondall's speech that day found me full enough of opposition, and not at all inclined to be sympathetic. But the thing of it was, I knew him for an honest and disinterested man; a man alight with high inspiration and lofty motive; a man immeasurably above sordid or selfish ends. And it

was my task, first, to ridicule him; and, second, to attach sordidness and self-interest to him. That was the thing which made the day eventful for me.

John Crondall talked of British rule and British justice, as he had known them in the world's far places. He drew pictures of Oriental rule, Boer rule, Russian rule, savage rule; and, again, of the methods and customs of foreign Powers in their colonial administration. When he claimed this and that for British rule, and the Imperial unity which must back it, as such, sneers came naturally to me. The anti-British sentiment covered that. My qualms began, when he based his plea upon the value of British administration to all concerned, the danger to civilization, to mankind, of its being allowed to weaken.

Remember, he spoke in pictures, and in the first person; not of imaginings, but of what he had seen: how a single anti-British speech in London, meant a month's prolongation of bloody strife in one country, or an added weight of cruel oppression in another. Right or wrong, John Crondall carried you with him; for he dealt with men and things as he had brothered and known them, before ever he let loose, in a fiery peroration, that abstract idea of Empire patriotism which ruled his life.

But it was not all this that made my paltry journalistic task a hard one. It was my certainty of Crondall's lofty sincerity. From that afternoon I date the beginning of the end of my *Daily Gazette* engagement. Some men in my shoes would have moved to success from this point; gaining from it either complete unscrupulousness, or the bold decision

which would have made them important as friends or enemies. For my part I was simply slackened by the episode. I met John Crondall several times again. He chaffed me in the most generous fashion over my abominably unfair report of the luncheon gathering. He influenced me greatly, though my opinions remained untouched, so far as I knew.

I cannot explain just how John Crondall influenced me, but I am very conscious that he had a broadening effect on me — he enlarged my horizon. If he had remained in London things might have gone differently with me. One cannot tell. Among other things, I know his influence mightily reduced the number and length of my letters to Weybridge. In my mind I was always fighting John Crondall. It was my crowded millions of England against his lonely, sun-browned men and women outside — his world interests. The war in my heart was real, unceasing. And then there was pretty Sylvia and her little soul, and her meditations, and her daily miracles. The pin-point, bright as it was, became too tiny for me to concentrate upon it, when contrasted with these other tumultuous concerns.

Then came a crowded, confused week, in which I saw John Crondall depart by the South African boat-train from Waterloo. The first lieutenant of his dead leader out there had cabled for Crondall to come and hold his broad shoulders against the side of some political dam. My eyes pricked when John Crondall wrung my hand.

"You're all right, sonny," he said. "Don't you suppose I have the smallest doubt about you."

I had never given him anything but sneers and opposition — I, a little unknown scrub of a reporter; he a man who helped to direct policies and shape States. Here he was rushing off to the other side of the earth at his own expense, sacrificing his own interests and engagements at home, in the service of an Idea, an abstract Tie, a Flag. My philosophy had seemed spacious beside, say, Sylvia's: to secure better things for those about me, instead of for my own soul only. But what of Crondall? As I say, my eyes pricked, even while I framed some sentence in my mind expressing regret for his wrong-headedness. Ah, well!

The same week — the same day — brought me the gentlest little note of dismissal from Sylvia. Her duty to her father, and — my ideas seemed too much for her peace of mind; so bewildering. "I am no politician, you know; and truth to tell, these matters which seem so much to you that you would have them drive religion from me, they seem to me so infinitely unimportant. Forgive me!"

No doubt my vanity was wounded, but I will not pretend that I was very seriously hurt. Neither could I ponder long upon the matter, because another letter, received by the same post, claimed my attention. Sylvia's letter threw out a hint of better things for us in a year or two's time. Her notion of a break between us was "for the present." There were references to "later on, when you can come here again, and we need not hide things." But my other letter made more instant claims. It was type-written, and ran thus:

"DEAR MR. MORDAN: — Mr. Chas. N. Pierce directs me to inform you that after the expiration of the present month your services will no longer be required by the editor of the *Daily Gazette.*

"I am, Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"JAMES MARTIN,

"*Secretary.*"

I pictured the little pale-eyed rabbit of a man typing the dictum of his Napoleon, his hero, and wondering in his amiable way how "Mr. Mordan" would be affected thereby, and how he had managed to displease the great man. As for "the editor of the *Daily Gazette,*" I had not seen him since the day of my engagement. But I recalled now various recent signs of chill disapproval of my work on Mr. Pierce's part. And, indeed, I was aware myself of a slackness in my work, a kind of reckless, windmill-tilting tendency in my general attitude.

Meantime, there was the fact that I had recently encroached twice upon my tiny nest-egg; once to buy a wedding present for my sister Lucy, and once for a piece of silly extravagance.

It was quite a notable week.

IX

A STEP DOWN

"Cosmopolitanism is nonsense; the cosmopolite is a cipher, worse than a cipher; outside of nationality there is neither art, nor truth, nor life; there is nothing." — IVAN TURGENIEFF.

I HAVE mentioned a piece of reckless extravagance; it was reckless in view of my straightened circumstances. And the reason I mention this apparent trifle is that it and its attendant circumstances influenced me in my conduct after the abrupt termination of the *Daily Gazette* engagement.

One of my fellow knights of the reporters' room introduced me in a certain Fleet Street wine-bar to one of the characters of that classic highway — a man named Clement Blaine, who edited and owned a weekly publication called *The Mass*. I hasten to add that this journal had nothing whatever to do with any kind of religious observance. Its title referred to the people, or rather, to the section of the public which, at that time, we still described by the quaintly misleading phrase, "the working classes," as though work were a monopoly in the hands of the manual labourer.

The Mass was a journal which had quite a vogue at that time. This was brought about, I suppose,

by the wave of anti-nationalism which, in 1906, established the notorious administration which subsequently became known as "The Destroyers." It was maintained largely, I fancy, by Clement Blaine's genius for getting himself quoted in other journals of every sort and standing.

The existence of *The Mass*, and the popularity which it earned by outraging every civic and national decency, stands in my mind as a striking example of the extraordinary laxity and slackness of moral which had grown out of our boasted tolerance, broad-mindedness, and cosmopolitanism. We had waxed drunken upon the parrot-like asseveration of "rights," which our fathers had won for us, and we had no time to spare for their compensating duties. This misquided apotheosis of what we considered freedom and broad-mindedness, produced the most startling and anomalous situations in our national life, including the almost incredible fact that, while nominally at peace with the world, the State was being bitterly warred against by cliques and parties among its own subjects.

For instance, in any other State than our own, my new acquaintance, Clement Blaine, would have been safely disposed in a convenient prison cell, and his flamingly seditious journal would have been promptly and effectually squashed. In England the man was free as the Prime Minister, and a Department of State, the Post Office, was engaged in the distribution of the journal which he devoted exclusively to stirring up animosity against that State, and traitorous opposition to its constitution.

Further, Mr. Blaine's vitriolic outpourings, his unnatural defilement of his own nest, were gravely quoted in every newspaper in the Kingdom, without a hint of recognition of the fact that they were fundamentally criminal and a public offence. The sacrosanct "liberty of the subject" was involved; and though Mr. Blaine would have been forcibly restrained if he had shown any tendency to injure lamp-posts, or to lay hands upon his own worthless life, he was given every facility in his self-appointed task of inciting the public to all sorts of offences against the State, and to a variety of forms of national suicide.

It was the commonest thing for a Member of Parliament, a man solemnly sworn and consecrated to the loyal service of the Crown and State, to fill a signed column of Clement Blaine's paper, with an article or letter the whole avowed end of which would be the championing of some national enemy or rival, or the advocacy of means whereby a shrewd blow might be struck against British rule or British prestige in some part of the world.

I recall one long and scurrilous article by a Member of Parliament, urging rebellious natives in South Africa to take heart of grace and pursue with ever-increasing vigour their attacks upon the small and isolated white populace which upheld British rule in that part of the Continent. I remember a long and venomous letter from another Member of Parliament (a strong advocate of the State payment of members) defending in the most ardently sympathetic manner both the action and the sentiments of a munic-

ipal official who had torn down and destroyed the Union Jack upon an occasion of public ceremony.

We called this sort of thing British freedom in those chaotic days; and when our Continental rivals were not jeering at the grotesqueness of it, they were lauding this particular form of madness to the skies, as well they might, seeing that our insensate profligacy and incontinence meant their gain. The cause of a foreigner, good, bad, or indifferent — that was the cause Clement Blaine most loved to champion in his journal. An attack upon anything British, though the author of it might be the basest creature ever outlawed from any community — that was certain of ready and eager hospitality in the columns of *The Mass.*

I can conceive of no infamy which that journal was not ready to condone, no offence it would not seek to justify — save and except the crime of patriotism, loyalty, avowed love of Britain. And this obscene, mad-dog policy, so difficult even to imagine at this time, was by curious devious ways identified with Socialism. *The Mass* was called a Socialist organ. The fact may have been a libel upon Socialism, if not upon Socialists; but so it was.

Be it said that at Cambridge I had rather surprised the evangelical section of my college (Corpus Christi) by the part I played in founding a short-lived institution called the Anonymous Society, the choicest spirits in which affected canvas shirts and abstention from the use of neckties. As Socialists, we invited the waiters of the college to a soirée, at which a judicious blend of revolutionary economics and bitter

beer was relied upon to provide a flow of reasonable and inexpensive entertainment. The society lapsed after a time, chiefly owing, if I remember rightly, to an insufficiency of funds for refreshments. But I had remained rather a person to be reckoned with at the Union.

I regarded my meeting with Clement Blaine as something of an event, and I very cheerfully and quite gratuitously contributed an article to his journal dealing with some form of government subvention which I held to be a State duty. (We wasted few words over the duties of the citizen in those days.) It was as a result of that article that I was invited to a Socialist soirée in which the moving spirit, at all events in the refreshment-room, was Mr. Clement Blaine. Here I met a variety of queer fish who called themselves Socialists. They were of both sexes, and upon the whole they were a silly, inconsequent set. Their views rather wearied me, despite my predisposition to favour them.

They were a kind of tepid, ineffectual anarchists, unconvinced and wholly unconvincing. Broadly speaking, theirs was a policy of blind reversal. They were not constructive, but they were opposed vaguely to the existing order of things, and, particularly, to everything British. They pinned their faith to the foreigner in all things, even though the foreigner's whole energies might be devoted to the honest endeavour to raise conditions in his country to a level approaching the British standard. Any contention against the existing order, and, above all, anything

against Britain, appealed directly to these rather tawdry people.

In this drab, ineffective gathering, I found one point of colour, like a red rose on a dingy white tablecloth. This was Beatrice, the daughter of Clement Blaine. I believe the man had a wife. One figures her as a worn household drudge. In any case, she made no appearance in any of the places in which I met Blaine, or his handsome daughter. Beatrice Blaine was a new type to me. One had read of such girls, but I had never met them. And I suppose novelty always has a certain charm for youth. One felt that Beatrice had crossed the Rubicon. Mentally, at all events, one gathered that she had thrown her bonnet over the windmill.

Physically, materially, I have no doubt that Beatrice was perfectly well qualified to take care of herself. But here was a very handsome girl who was entirely without reticence or reserve. With her, many things usually treated with respect were — "all rot." Beatrice's aim in life was pleasure, and she not merely admitted, but boasted of the fact. She did not think much of her father's friends as individuals. She probably objected to their dinginess. But she acclaimed herself a thoroughgoing Socialist, I think because she believed that Socialism meant the provision of plenty in money, dresses, pleasures, and so forth, for all who were short of these commodities.

Perhaps I was a shade less dingy than the others. At all events, Beatrice honoured me with her favour upon this occasion, and talked to me of pleasure. So far as recollection serves me she connected pleasure

chiefly with theatres, restaurants, the habit of supping in public, and the use of hansom cabs. At all events, within the week I squandered two whole sovereigns out of my small hoard on giving this young pagan what she called a "fluffy" evening. It reminded me more than a little of certain rather frantic undergraduate excursions from Cambridge. But Beatrice quoted luscious lines of minor poetry, and threw a certain glamour over a quarter of the town which was a warren of tawdry immorality; the hunting-ground of a pallid-faced battalion of alien pimps and parasites.

England was then the one civilized country in the world which still welcomed upon its shores the outcast, rejected, refuse of other lands; and, as a matter of course, when foreign capitals became positively too hot for irreclaimable characters, they flocked into Whitechapel and Soho, there to indulge their natural bent for every kind of criminality known to civilization, save those involving physical risk or physical exertion for the criminal. There were then whole quarters of the metropolis out of which every native resident had gradually been ousted, in which the English language was rarely heard, except during a police raid.

Tens of thousands of these unclassed, denationalized foreigners lived and waxed fat by playing upon the foibles and pandering to the weaknesses of the great city's native population. Others, of a higher class, steadily ousted native labour in the various branches of legitimate commerce. We know now, to our cost, something of the malignant danger these

foreigners represented. In indirect ways one would have supposed their evil influence was sufficiently obvious then. But I remember that the parties represented by such organs as the *Daily Gazette* prided themselves upon their furious opposition to any hint of precautions making for the restriction of alien immigration.

England was the land of the free, they said. Yet, while boasting that England was the refuge of the persecuted (as well as the rejected) of all lands, we were so wonderfully broad-minded that we upheld anything foreign against anything British, and were intolerant only of English sentiment, English rule, English institutions. I believe Beatrice's conviction of the superiority of the Continent and of foreigners generally was based upon the belief that:

"On the Continent people can really enjoy themselves. There's none of our ridiculous English puritanism, and early closing, and rubbish of that sort there."

I am rather surprised that the crude hedonism of Beatrice should have appealed to me, for my weaknesses had never really included mere fleshly indulgence. But, as I have said, the girl had the charm of novelty for me. I remember satirically assuring myself that, upon the whole, her frank concentration upon worldly pleasure was more natural and pleasing than Sylvia's rapt concentration upon other kinds of self-ministration. Ours was a period of self-indulgence. Beatrice was, after all, only a little more naïve and outspoken than the majority in her thirst

for pleasure. And she was quite charming to look upon.

Almost the first man to whom I spoke regarding my dismissal from the staff of the *Daily Gazette* was Clement Blaine. I met him in Fleet Street, and was asked in to his cupboard of an office.

"You are a man who knows every one in Fleet Street," I said. "I wish you would keep an eye lifting for a journalistic billet for me."

And then I told him that I was leaving the *Daily Gazette*, and spoke of the work I had done, and of my little journalistic experiences at Cambridge.

He combed his glossy black beard with the fingers of one hand; a white hand it was, save where cigarettes had browned the first and second fingers; a hand that had never known physical toil, though its owner always addressed "working" men as one of themselves. He wore a fiery red necktie, and a fiery diamond on the little finger of the hand that combed his beard. A self-indulgent life in the city was telling on him, but Clement Blaine was still rather a fine figure of a man, in his coarse, bold way. He had a varnished look, and, dressed for the part, would have made a splendid stage pirate.

"It's odd you should have come to me to-day," he said. "Look here!"

He handed me a cutting from a daily paper.

> At Holloway, yesterday afternoon, an inquest was held on the body of a man named Joseph Cartwright, who is said to have been a journalist. This man was found dead upon his bed, fully

> dressed, on Tuesday morning. The medical evidence showed death to be due to heart failure, and indicated alcoholism as the predisposing cause. A verdict was returned in accordance with the medical evidence.

"He was my assistant editor," said Clement Blaine, as I looked up from my perusal of this sorry tale.

"Really?" I said.

"Yes, a clever fellow; most accomplished journalist, but" — And Mr. Blaine raised his elbow with a significant gesture, by which he suggested the act of drinking.

Within the hour I had accepted an engagement as assistant editor of *The Mass* with the magnificent sum of two pounds a week by way of remuneration.

"It's poor pay," said Blaine. "And I only wish I could double it. But that's all it will run to at present, and — well, of course, it counts for something to be working for the cause as directly as we do in *The Mass*."

I nodded, not without qualms. My education made it impossible for me to accept unreservedly the most scurrilous features of the journal. But the cause was good — I was assured of that; and I would introduce improvements, I thought. I was still very inexperienced. Meantime, I was not to know the carking anxiety of the out-of-work. I could still pay my way at the Bloomsbury lodging. This was something.

Beatrice expressed herself as delighted. I was to accumulate large sums in various vague ways, and enjoy innumerable "fluffy evenings" with her.

What a queer mad jumble of a shut-in world our

London was, and how blindly self-centred we all were in our pursuit of immediate gain, in our absolute indifference to the larger outside movements, the shaping of national destinies, the warring of national interests! I remember that we were quite triumphant, in our little owlish way, that year; for the weight of socialistic and anti-national, anti-responsible feeling had forced a time-serving Cabinet into cutting down our Navy by a quarter at one stroke. The hurried scramblers after money and pleasure were much gratified.

"We can make defensive alliances with other Powers," they said. "Meantime — retrench, reduce, cut down, and give us more freedom in our race. Freedom, freedom — that's the thing; and peace for the development of commerce."

Undoubtedly, as a people, we were fey.

X

FACILIS DESCENSUS AVERNI

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
  From out the storied Past, and used
  Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turned round on fixed poles,
  Love that endures not sordid ends,
  For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
  Nor feed with crude imaginings
  The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
  To weakness, neither hide the ray
  From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light. — TENNYSON.

AND now, as assistant editor of *The Mass*, I entered a period of my life upon which I look back as one might who, by chance rather than by reason of any particular fitness for survival, had won safely through a whirlpool. The next few years were a troublous time, a stormy era of transition, for most English people. For many besides myself

the period was a veritable maelstrom of confusion, of blind battling with unrecognized forces, of wasted effort, neglected duty, futile struggles, and slavish inertia.

At an early stage I learned to know Clement Blaine for a sweater of underpaid labour, a man as grossly self-indulgent as he was unprincipled, as much a charlatan as he was, in many ways, an ignoramus. Yet I see now, more clearly than then, that even Clement Blaine was not all bad. He was not even completely a charlatan. He believed he was justified in making all the money he could, in any way that was possible. It must be remembered, however, that at that time most people really thought, whatever they might say, that the first and most obvious duty in life was to make money for themselves.

Then, too, I think Blaine really believed that the sort of anti-national, socialistic theories he advocated would make for the happiness of the people; for the profit and benefit of the majority. He was blinded by lack of knowledge of history and of human nature. He was an extreme example, perhaps, but, after all, his mistaken idea that happiness depended upon personal possession of this and that, upon having and holding, was very generally accepted at that time. The old saving sense of duty, love of country, national responsibility, and pride of race, had faded and become unreal to a people feverishly bent upon personal gain only. Nelson's famous signal and watchword was kept alive, in inscriptions; in men's hearts and minds it no longer had any meaning; it made no appeal. This is to speak broadly, of course,

and of the majority. We had some noble exceptions to the rule.

In looking back now upon that period, it seems to me, as I suppose to all who lived through it, such a tragedy of confusion, of sordidness, and of futility, that one is driven to take too sweepingly pessimistic a view of the time. I have said a good deal of the anti-national sentiment, because it was undoubtedly in the ascendant then. As history shows us, this sentiment ruled; by it the ship of state was steered; by it the defences of the Empire were cut down and down to the ultimate breaking point. We call the administration of that period criminally unpatriotic. As such "The Destroyers" must always figure in history. But we must not forget that then, as now, we English people had as good a Government as we deserved. The spirit of selfish irresponsibility was not confined to Whitehall.

On the other hand, it must not be supposed that no patriotic party existed. There was a patriotic party, and the exigencies of the time inspired some of its leaders nobly. But the sheer weight of numbers, of indifference, and of selfishness to which this party was opposed was too much for it. The best method of realizing this nowadays is by the study of the newspaper files for the early years of the century. From these it will be seen that even the people and journals in whom devoted patriotism survived, even the leaders who gave up their time and energy (politics gave us such a man, the Army another, the Navy another, literature another, and journalism gave us an editor in whom the right fire burned brightly) to the task of

warning and adjuring the public, and seeking to awaken the nation to the lost sense of its dangers, its duties, and its responsibilities; even these were forced by the weight of public selfishness into using an almost apologetic tone, with reference to the common calls of patriotism and Imperial unity.

People dismissed an obvious challenge of the national conscience with a hurried and impatient wave of the hand. They were tired of this; they had heard enough of the other; they were occupied with local interests of the moment, and could not be bothered with this or that consideration affecting the welfare of the world-wide shores of greater outside Britain. And, accordingly, we find that the most patriotic and public-spirited journal was obliged, for its life, to devote more attention to a football match at the Crystal Palace than to a change of public policy affecting the whole commercial future of a part of the Empire twenty times greater than Britain. There were other journals, organs of the self-centred majority, that would barely even mention an Imperial development of that sort, and then but casually, as a matter of no particular interest to their readers; as indeed it was.

I do not think that retrospection has coloured my view too darkly when I say that my brief experience in Fleet Street made me feel that the *Daily Gazette* party, the supporters of "The Destroyers" (as naval folk had named the Government of the day) consisted of a mass of smugly hypocritical self-seekers; and that the party I served under Clement Blaine were a mass of blatantly frank self-seekers.

Such generalizations can never be quite just, however. There were earnest and devoted men in every section of the community. But, as a generalization, as indicating the typical characteristics of the parties, I fear that my view has been proved correct.

It would be quite a mistake to suppose that in the political world the shortcomings were all on one side. Writers like myself, even men like Clement Blaine, had only too much justification for the contempt they poured upon the Conservative party. Selfishness, indolence, and the worship of the fossilized party spirit, had eaten into the very vitals of this section of the political world. The form of madness we called party loyalty made the best men we had willing to sacrifice national to personal interests. So-and-so must retain his place; loyalty to the party demands our support there and there. We must give it, whatever the consequences. The thing is not easy to understand; but it was so, and the strongest and best men of the day were culpable in this.

The farther my London experiences took me, the greater became the mass of my shattered illusions, broken ideals, and lost hopes. I remember my reflections during a brief visit I paid to my mother in Dorset, when I had spent an evening talking with my sister Lucy's husband. Doctor Woodthrop was a good fellow enough, and my sister seemed happier with him than one would have expected, remembering that it was rather the desire for freedom, than love, which gave her to him.

Woodthrop was popular, honest, steady-going; a fine, typical Englishman of the period, I suppose.

In politics he was as his father before him, though the name had changed from Tory to Conservative. He talked politics for a week at election time. I would not say that he ever thought politics. I know that he had no knowledge, and less interest, where the affairs of his country were concerned, when I met and talked with him during that visit. The country's defences were actually of far less importance in his eyes than the country's cricket averages. As for either social reform interests in England, or the affairs of the Empire outside England, he simply could not be induced to give them even conversational breathing space. They were as exotic to my sister's husband as the ethics of esoteric Buddhism. But he was a thick and thin Conservative. To be sure, he would have said, nothing would cause him to waver in that.

As for myself, I defended the anti-national party in its repudiation of Imperial responsibility by arguing that the domestic needs of the country were too urgent and great to admit of any kind of expenditure, in money or energy, upon outside affairs. We did not recognize that internal reform and content were absolutely incompatible with shameless neglect of fundamental duties.

We were as sailors who should concentrate upon drying and cleaning their cabin, seeking at all hazards to make that comfortable, while refusing to spare time for the ship's pumps, though the water was rising in her hold from a score of external fissures. Our anti-nationalists and Little Englanders were little cabin-dwellers, shirkers from the open deck, careless of the ship's hull, and masts, and sails, busily

bent only upon the enrichment of their particular divisions among her saloons.

In the early days of my engagement as assistant editor of *The Mass,* I think I may claim that I worked hard and with honest intent to make the paper represent truly what I conceived to be the good and helpful side of Socialism, of social progress and reform. But, if I am to be frank, I fear I must admit that within six months of my first engagement by Clement Blaine, I had ceased to entertain any sincere hope or ambition in this direction. And yet I remained assistant editor of *The Mass.*

The two statements doubtless redound to my discredit, and I have little excuse to offer. The work represented bread and butter for me, and that counted for something, of course. But I will admit that I think I could have found some more worthy employment, and should have done so but for Beatrice Blaine, my employer's daughter.

Time and time again my gorge rose at being obliged to play my part — very often, as a writer, the principal part — in what I knew to be an absolutely dishonest piece of journalism. Once I remember refusing to write a grossly malicious and untrue representation of certain actions of John Crondall's in the Transvaal. But I am ashamed to say I revised the proofs of the lying thing, and saw it to press, when a hireling of Clement Blaine's had prepared it. The man was a discharged servant of Crondall's, a convicted thief, as I afterwards learned, as well as a most abandoned liar. But his scurrilous fabrication, after publication in *The Mass,* was quoted at length

by the *Daily Gazette*, and by the journals of that persuasion throughout the country.

I hardly know how to explain my relations with Blaine's daughter. I suppose the main point is she was beautiful, in the sense that certain cats are beautiful. I rarely heard of my Weybridge friends now, and never, directly, of Sylvia. My life seemed infinitely remote from that of the luxurious Wheeler *ménage*. When I chanced to earn a few guineas with my pen outside the littered office of *The Mass* (where the bulk of the editorial work fell to me), the money was almost invariably devoted to the entertainment of Beatrice. She was in several ways not unlike a kitten, or something feline, of larger growth: the panther, for example, in Balzac's thrilling story, "A Passion in the Desert."

I have never, before or since, met any woman so totally devoid of the moral sense as Beatrice. Yet she had a heart that was not bad; indeed it was a tender heart. But there was no moral sense to guide and balance her.

I think of Beatrice as very much a product of that time. Her own personal enjoyment, pleasure, indulgence; these formed alike the centre and the limit of her thoughts and aims. And the suggestion that serious thought or energy should be given to any other end, struck Beatrice as necessarily insincere and absurd. As for duty, the word had no more real application to her own life as Beatrice saw it than the counsels of old-time chivalry for the pursuit of the Holy Grail.

Soberly considered, this is doubtless very grievous.

But it must be said that if Beatrice was singular in this, her singularity lay rather in her frank disclosure of her attitude than in the attitude itself. I am not sure that morally her absorption in such crude pleasures as she knew, was a whit more culpable than the equal absorption of nine people out of ten at that time, in money-getting, in sport, in society functions, or in sheer idleness. The same oblivion to the sense of duty was very generally characteristic; though in other matters, no doubt, the moral sense was more active. In Beatrice it simply was not present at all.

All this was tolerably clear to me even then; but I will not pretend that it interfered much with the physical and emotional attraction which Beatrice had for me. Apart from her my life was very drab in colour. I had no recreations. In my time at Rugby and at Cambridge we either practically ignored sport (so far, at all events, as actual participation in it went), or lived for it. I had very largely ignored it. Now, Beatrice Blaine represented, not exactly recreation, perhaps — no, not that I think — but gaiety. The hours I spent in her company were the only form of gaiety that entered into my life.

My feeling for Beatrice was not serious love, not at all a grand passion; but denying myself the occasional pleasure of ministering to her appetite for little outings would have been a harder task for me than the acceptation of Sylvia Wheeler's dismissal. My attentions to Beatrice were very much those of Balzac's Provençal to his panther, after he had overcome his first terrors.

There were times when her acceptance of gifts or

compliments from another man made me believe myself really in love with Beatrice. Then some peculiarly distasteful aspect of my journalistic work would be forced upon me; I would receive some striking illustration of the hopelessly sordid character of Blaine and his circle, of the policy of *The Mass*, of the general trend of my life; and, seeing Beatrice's indifferent acceptance of all this venality, I would turn from her with a certain sense of revulsion — for three days. After that, I would return to handsome Beatrice, with her feline graces and her warm colouring, as a chilly, tired man turns from his work to his fireside.

In short, as time went on, I became as indifferent to ends and aims as the most callous among those at whose indifference to matters of real moment I had once girded so vehemently. And I lacked their excuse. I cut no figure at all in the race for money and pleasure; unless my clinging to Beatrice be accounted pursuit of pleasure. Certainly it lacked the rapt absorption which characterized the multitude really in the race. I fear I was rapidly degenerating into a common type of Fleet Street hack; into nothing more than Clement Blaine's assistant. And then a quite new influence came into my life.

XI

MORNING CALLERS

A woman mixed of such fine elements
That were all virtue and religion dead
She'd make them newly, being what she was.
GEORGE ELIOT.

A SANDY-HAIRED youth-of-all-work, named Rivers, spent his days in the box we called the front office; a kind of lobby really, by which one entered the tolerably large and desperately untidy room in which Blaine and myself compiled each issue of *The Mass*. Blaine spent a good slice of all his days in keeping appointments, usually in Fleet Street bars.

My days were spent in the main office of the paper, among the files, the scissors and paste, the books of reference, and the three Gargantuan waste-paper baskets. Here at different times I interviewed men of every European nationality and every known calling, besides innumerable followers of no recognized trade or profession. Among them all I cannot call to mind more than two or three who, by the most charitable stretch of imagination, could have been called gentlemen.

Most of them were obviously, and in all ways seedy, shady characters — furtive, wordy creatures, full of

vague, involved grievances. The greater proportion were foreigners; scallywags from the mean streets of every Continental capital; men familiar with prisons; men who talked of the fraternity of labour, and never did any work; men full of windy plans for the enrichment of humanity, who themselves must always borrow and never repay — money, food, shelter, and the other things for which honest folk give their labour.

If an English Cabinet Minister had offered us an explanation of any political development we should have had small use for his contribution in *The Mass*, unless as an advertisement of our importance. For their teaching, for the text they gave us in our fulminations, we greatly preferred the rancorous and generally scurrilous vapourings of some unknown alien dumped upon our shores for the relief and benefit of his own country.

We wanted no information from Admiralty Lords about the Navy, from commanding officers about the Army, from pro-Consuls about the Colonies, or from the Foreign Office about foreign relations. But a deserter or a man dismissed from either of the Services, a broker ne'er-do-well rejected as unfit by one of the Colonies, or a foreign agitator with stories to tell of Britain's duplicity abroad; these were all welcome fish for our net, and folk whom it was my duty to receive with respectful attention. From their perjured lips it became my mechanical duty to extract and publish wisdom for the use of our readers in the guidance of their lives and the exercise of their rights as citizens and ratepayers. I became adept at the

work, and in the end accomplished it daily without interest, and with only occasional qualms of conscience. It was my living.

On a sunshiny morning in June, which I remember very well, the sandy-haired Rivers brought me a visiting-card upon which I read the name of "Miss Constance Grey." In one corner of the card the words "Cape Town" had been crossed out and a London address written over them.

I was engaged at the time with a large, pale, fat man from Stettin, whose mission it was to show me that the socialist working men of the Fatherland dearly loved their comrades in England, and that the paying of taxes for the defence of these islands was a preposterously absurd thing, for the reason that the Socialists would never allow Germany to go to war with England or with any other country. "The Destroyers," in their truckling to Demos, had already cut down Naval and Army estimates by more than one-half since their rise to power, and our Stettin ambassador was priming me regarding a demand for further reductions, prior to actual disarmament, to provide funds for the fixing of a minimum day's pay and a maximum day's work.

The gentleman from Stettin was to provide us with material for a special article and a leading article. His proposals were to be made a "feature." However, I thought I had gone far enough with him at this time; and so, looking from his pendulous jowl to the card in my hand, I told Rivers to ask the lady to wait for two minutes, and to say that I would see her then. I remember Herr Mitmann found the occa-

sion opportune for the airing of what I suppose he would have called his sense of humour. His English and his front teeth were equally badly broken, and his taste in jokes was almost as swinishly gross as his appearance. But I was able to be quit of him at length, and then Rivers ushered in Miss Constance Grey.

As I rose to provide my visitor with a chair, I received the impression that she was a young and quietly well-dressed woman, with a notable pair of dark eyes. I thought of her as being no more than five-and-twenty years of age and pleasant to look upon. But her eyes were the feature that seized one's attention. They produced an impression of light and brilliancy, of vigour, intelligence, and charm.

"I called to see you at the office of the *Daily Gazette*, Mr. Mordan, and this was the only address of yours they could give me, or I should have hesitated about intruding on you in working hours. I bring you an introduction from John Crondall."

And with that she handed me a letter in Crondall's writing, and nodded in a friendly way when I asked permission to read it at once.

"Please do," she said.

She had no particular accent, but yet her speech differed slightly from that of the conventional Englishwoman of her class — the refined and well-educated Englishwoman, that is. I suppose the difference was rather one of expression, tone, and choice of phrase than a matter of accent. I doubt if one could easily find an example of it nowadays, increased communication having so much broadened our own collo-

"Rivers ushered in Miss Constance Grey"

quial diction that many of its conventional peculiarities have disappeared. But it existed then, and after a time I learned to place it as characteristic of the speech of Greater Britain, as distinguished from the English of those of us who lived always in this capital centre of the Empire.

Miss Grey had the Colonial directness and vividness of speech; a larger, freer diction upon the whole than that of the Londoner born and bred; more racy, less clipped and formal, but, in certain ways, more correct. The society *cliche*, and the society fads of abbreviation and accent, were missing; and in their place was an easy, idiomatic directness, distinctly noticeable to a man like myself who had actually never been out of England. This it was that first struck me about Miss Grey; this and the warm brilliance of her eyes: a graphic, moving speech, a frank, compelling gaze; both indicative, as it seemed to me, of broadly sympathetic understanding.

I read John Crondall's kindly letter with a good deal of interest, moved by the fact that his terse, friendly phrases recalled to me a phase of my own life which, though no more than a couple of years past, seemed to me wonderfully remote. I had been new to London and to Fleet Street then, full of aspirations, of earnestness, of independent aims and hopes; fresh from the University and the more leisured days of my life as the son of the rector of Tarn Regis. I had had glimpses of much that was sordid and squalid in London life, at the period John Crondall's letter recalled, but as yet there had been no sordidness in my own life. All that was far other-

wise now, I felt. Cambridge and Dorset were a long way from the office of *The Mass.* I thought of the greasy Teuton nondescript for whom I had kept Miss Grey waiting, and I felt colour rise in my face as I read John Crondall's letter;

"I expect you have been burgeoning mightily since I left London, and I should not be surprised to learn that you have put the *Daily Gazette* and its kind definitely behind you. You remember our talks? Tut, my dear fellow, Liberalism, Conservatism, Radicalism — it's of not the slightest consequence, and they're all much of a muchness. The thing is to stand to one's duty as a citizen of the Empire, not as a member of this or that little tin coterie; and if we stick honourably to that, nothing else matters. You will like Constance Grey; that is why I have asked her to look you up. She's sterling all through; her father's daughter to the backbone. And he was the man of whom Talbot said: 'Give me two Greys, and' — and a couple of other men he mentioned — 'and a free hand, and Whitehall could go to sleep with its head on South Africa, and never be disturbed again.'" — When Crondall quoted his dead chief, the man whose personality had dominated British South Africa, one felt he had said his utmost. — "The principal thing that takes her to London now, I believe, is detail connected with a special series she has been engaged upon for *The Times;* fine stuff, from what I have seen of it. It is marvellous the grip this one little bit of a girl has of South African affairs."

"Yes," I thought, now the fact was mentioned, "I suppose she is small."

"I hope the articles will be well read, for there's a heap of the vitals of South Africa in them; and even if they are to cut us adrift altogether, it's as well 'The Destroyers' should know a little about us, and the country. Constance Grey's name and introductions will take her anywhere in London, or I would have asked your help in that way."

I thought of Clement Blaine's friends, my own Fleet Street circle, and shifted uncomfortably in my chair.

"As it is, the boot may be rather on the other leg, and she may be of some service to you. But in any case, I want you to know each other, because you are a good chap, and will interest her, I know; and because she is of the bigger Britain and will interest you. Things political are, of course, looking pretty blue for us all, and your particular friends — I rather hope perhaps they're not so much your friends by now — are certainly doing their level best to cut all moorings. But one must keep pegging away. The more cutting for them, the more splicing for us. But I do wish we could blindfold Europe until these 'Destroyers' had got enough rope, and satisfactorily hanged themselves; for if they go much farther, their hanging will come too late to save the situation. Well, salue!"

I allowed my eyes to linger over the tail-end of the letter, while I thought. I was sensible of a very real embarrassment. There seemed a kind of treachery to John Crondall, a kind of unfairness to Miss Grey, in my receiving her there at all. By this time one had no illusions left regarding Clement Blaine and his

circle, nor about *The Mass*. I knew that, at heart, I was ashamed, and with good reason, of my connection with both. Still, there I was; it was my living; and — I suppose my eyes must have wandered from the letter. At all events, evidently seeing that I had finished reading it, my visitor spoke.

"I had an introduction to the editor of the *Daily Gazette*, so I took advantage of being there this afternoon to see him. A nice man, I thought, though I don't care for his paper. He remembered you as soon as I mentioned your name, and told me you — you were here. He seemed quite sorry you had left his paper; but I am sure I can understand the attraction of a position in which the whole concern is more or less in one's own hands. Mr. Delaney found me a copy of *The Mass;* so I have been studying you before calling. Perhaps you have inadvertently done so much by me, through *The Times* — a rather high and dry old institution, isn't it?"

Naturally I had punctuated these remarks of hers, here and there. She had a very bright, alert way in talking, and now she added, easily, a sentence or two to the effect that it would be a dull world if we all held precisely the same views. She did the thing well, and in a few minutes I found myself chatting away with her in the most friendly manner. She managed with the utmost deftness to remove all ground for my embarrassment regarding my position. She talked for awhile of South Africa, and the life she had lived there prior to her father's death; but she touched no topic which contained any controversial

element. It seemed her aunt, a sister of her father's, had accompanied her to England, and she said:

"I promised my aunt, Mrs. Van Homrey, that I would induce you to spare us an evening soon. She loves meeting friends of John Crondall. We dine at eight, but would fix any other hour if it suited you better."

The end of it was I promised to dine with Miss Grey and her aunt in South Kensington on the following evening, and, after a quarter of an hour's very pleasant chat (twice interrupted by Rivers, who had people in his cupboard waiting to see me) my visitor rose to take her departure, with apologies for having trespassed upon a busy man's time. I told her with some warmth that the loss of my time was of no importance, and, with a thought as to the nature of my petty routine, I repeated the assurance. She smiled:

"Ah, that's just the masculine insincerity of your gallantry," she said, "unworn, I see, by working with women. John Crondall would have sent me packing."

"No doubt his time is of more value — better occupied."

I had a mental vision of Clement Blaine (who grew stouter and slacker day by day) sitting drinking with Herr Mitmann of Stettin, in a favourite bar, within fifty yards of the office.

"Still the insincerity of politeness," she laughed. "You forget I have read *The Mass*. I find you a terribly earnest partisan; very keenly occupied, I should say. Till to-morrow evening, then!"

And she was gone, and Rivers was leading in, like a bear on a cord, a tousled Polish Jew named Kraunski, who was teaching us how the Metropolitan Police Force should be run, and how tyrannically its wicked myrmidons oppressed worthy citizens of Houndsditch, like Mr. Kraunski — quite a good *Mass* feature.

So I stepped back again, feeling as though Constance Grey had carried away the pale London sunlight with her when she left my littered den.

XII

SATURDAY NIGHT IN LONDON

"Corrupted freemen are the worst of slaves."
DAVID GARRICK.

I REMEMBER that the evening of the day following my dinner engagement with Miss Grey and her aunt was consecrate, by previous arrangement, to Beatrice Blaine. I had received seven guineas a couple of days before for a rather silly and sensational descriptive article, the subject of which had been suggested by Beatrice. Indeed, she had made me write it, and liked the thing when it appeared in print. It described certain aspects of the quarter of London which stood for pleasure in her eyes; the quarter bounded by Charing Cross and Oxford Street, Leicester Square and Hyde Park Corner.

I think I would gladly have escaped the evening with Beatrice if I could have done so fairly. Seeing that I could not do this, and that my mood seemed chilly, I plunged with more than usual extravagance, and sought to work up all the gaiety I could. I had a vague feeling that I owed so much to Beatrice; that the occasion in some way marked a crisis in our relations. I did not mentally call it a last extrava-

gance, but yet I fancy that must have been the notion at the back of my mind; from which one may assume, I think, that Constance Grey had already begun to exercise some influence over me.

With the seven guineas clinking in the pockets of my evening clothes — here, at all events, was a link with University days, for these seldom-worn garments bore the name of a Cambridge tailor — I drove to the corner of the road beside Battersea Park in which the Blaines lived, and there picked up Beatrice, in all her vivid finery, by appointment. She loved bright colours and daring devices in dress. That I should come in a cab to fetch her was an integral part of her pleasure, and, if funds could possibly be stretched to permit it, she liked to retain the services of the same cab until I brought her back to her own door.

We drove to a famous showy restaurant close to Piccadilly Circus, where Beatrice accomplished the kind of entrance which delighted her heart, with attendants fluttering about her, and a messenger posting back to the cab for a forgotten fan, and a deal of bustle and rustle of one sort and another. A quarter of an hour was devoted to the choice of a menu in a dining-room which resembled the more ornate type of music-hall, and was of about the same size. The flashing garishness of it all delighted Beatrice, and the heat of its atmosphere suited both her mood and her extremely *décolleté* toilette.

I remember beginning to speak of my previous evening's engagement while Beatrice sipped the rather sticky champagne, which was the first item of the

meal to reach us. But a certain sense of unfitness or disinclination stopped me after a few sentences, and I did not again refer to my new friends; though I had been thinking a good deal of Constance Grey and her plain-faced, plain-spoken aunt. I felt strangely out of key with my environment in that glaring place, and the strains of an overloud orchestra, when they came crashing through the buzz of talk and laughter, and the clatter of glass and silver, were rather a relief to me as a substitute for conversation. I drank a great deal of champagne, and resented the fact that it seemed to have no stimulating effect upon me. But Beatrice was in a purring stage of contentment, her colour high, her passionate eyes sparkling, and low laughter ever atremble behind her full, red lips.

After the dinner we drove to another place exactly like the restaurant, all gilding and crimson plush, and there watched a performance, which for dulness and banality it would be difficult to equal anywhere. It was more silly than a peep-show at a country fair, but it was all set in a most gorgeous and costly frame. The man who did crude and ancient conjuring tricks was elaborately finely dressed, and attended by monstrous footmen in liveries of Oriental splendour. What he did was absurdly tame; the things he did it with, his accessories, were barbarously gorgeous.

This was not one of the great "Middle Class Halls," as they were called during their first year of existence, but an old-established haunt of those who aimed at "seeing life" — a great resort of ambitious young bloods about town. Not very long

before this time, a powerful trust had been formed to confer the stuffy and inane delights of the "Hall" upon that sturdily respectable suburban middle class — the backbone of London society — which had hitherto, to a great extent, eschewed this particular form of dissipation. The trust amassed wealth by striking a shrewd blow at our national character. Its entertainments were to be all refinement — "fun without vulgarity"; the oily announcements were nauseating. But they answered their purpose only too well. The great and still religious bourgeois class was securely hooked; and then the name of "Middle Class Halls" was dropped, and the programme provided in these garish palaces became simply an inexpensive and rather amateurish imitation of those of the older halls, plus a kind of prudish, sentimental, and even quasi-religious lubricity, which made them altogether revolting, and infinitely deleterious.

But our choice upon this occasion had fallen upon the most famous of the old halls. Of the performance I remember a topical song which evoked enthusiastic applause. It was an incredibly stupid piece of doggerel about England's position in the world; and the shiny-faced exquisite who declaimed it strutted to and fro like a bantam cock at each fresh roar of applause from the heated house. When he used the word "fight" he waved an imaginary sword and assumed a ridiculous posture, which he evidently connected with warlike exercises of some kind. The song praised the Government — "A Government er business men; men that's got sense" — and told how this wonderful Government had stopped the pouring

out of poor folks' money upon flag-waving, to devote it to poor folks' needs. It alluded to the title that Administration had earned: "The Destroyers"; and acclaimed it a proud title, because it meant the destruction of "gold-laced bunkcombe," and of "vampires that were preying on the British working man."

But the chorus was the thing, and the perspiring singer played conductor with all the airs and graces of a spangled showman in a booth, while the huge audience yelled itself hoarse over this. I can only recall two lines of it, and these were to the effect that: "They" — meaning the other Powers of civilization — "will never go for England, because England's got the dibs."

It was rather a startling spectacle; that vast auditorium, in which one saw countless flushed faces, tier on tier, gleaming through a haze of tobacco smoke; their mouths agape as they roared out the vapid lines of this song. I remember thinking that the doggerel might have been the creation of my fat contributor from Stettin, Herr Mitmann, and that if the music-hall public had reached this stage, I must have been oversensitive in my somewhat hostile and critical attitude toward the writings of that ponderous Teuton. I thought that for once *The Mass* would almost lag behind its readers; though in the beginning I had regarded Herr Mitmann's proposals as going beyond even our limits.

We left the hall while its roof echoed the jingling tail-piece of another popular ditty, which tickled Beatrice's fancy hugely. In it the singer expressed,

without exaggeration and without flattery, a good deal of the popular London attitude toward the pursuit of pleasure and the love of pleasure resorts. I recall phrases like: "Give my regards to Leicester Square — Greet the girls in Regent Street — Tell them in Bond Street we'll soon meet" — and, "Give them my love in the Strand."

The atmosphere reeked now of spirits, smoke, and overheated humanity. The voice of the great audience was hoarse and rather bestial in suggestion. The unescorted women began to make their invitations dreadfully pressing. Doubtless my mood coloured the whole tawdry business, but I remember finding those last few minutes distinctly revolting, and experiencing a genuine relief when we stepped into the outer air.

But the lights were just as brilliant outside, the pavements as thronged as the carpeted promenade, its faces almost as thickly painted as those of the lady who wished her "regards" given to Leicester Square, or the gentleman who had assured us that nobody wanted to fight England, because England had the "dibs."

Beatrice was now in feverishly high spirits. She no longer purred contentment; rather it seemed to me she panted in avid excitement, while pouring out a running fire of comment upon the dress and appearance of passers-by, as we drove to another palace of gilt and plush — a sort of magnified Pullman car, with decorations that made one's eyes ache. Here we partook of quite a complicated champagne supper. I dare say fifty pounds was spent in that room

after the gorgeously uniformed attendants had begun their chant of "Time, gentlemen, please; time!" which signified that the closing hour had arrived.

Beatrice kept up her excitement — or perhaps the champagne did this for her — until our cab was halfway across Chelsea Bridge. Then she lay back in her corner, and, I suppose, began to feel the grayness of the as yet unseen dawn of a new day. But as I helped her out of the cab in Battersea, she said she had thoroughly enjoyed her "fluffy" evening, and thanked me very prettily. I returned in the cab as far as Westminster, and there dismissed the man with the last of my seven guineas, having decided to walk from there to my Bloomsbury lodging.

For a Socialist, my conduct was certainly peculiar. There were two of us. We had had two meals, one of which was as totally unnecessary as the other was overelaborate. And we had spent an hour or two in watching an incredibly stupid and vulgar performance. And over this I had spent a sum upon which an entire family could have been kept going for a couple of months. But there were scores of people in London that night — some of them passed me in cabs and carriages, as I walked from the Abbey toward Fleet Street — who had been through a similar programme and spent twice as much over it as I had. It was an extraordinarily extravagant period; and it seemed that the less folk did in the discharge of their national obligations as citizens, the more they demanded, and the more they spent, in the name of pleasure.

The people who passed me, as I made my way east-

ward, were mostly in evening dress, pale and raffish-looking. Many, particularly among the couples in hansoms, were intoxicated, and making a painful muddle of such melodies as those we had listened to at the music hall. Overeaten, overdrunken, overexcited, overextravagant, in all ways figures of incontinence, these noisy Londoners made their way homeward, pursued by the advancing gray light of a Sabbath dawn in midsummer.

And Beatrice loved everything foreign, because the foreigners had none of our stupid British Puritanism! And the British public was mightily pleased with its Government, "The Destroyers," because they were cutting down to vanishing point expenditure upon such superfluous vanities as national defence, in order to devote the money to improving the conditions in which the public lived, and to the reducing of their heavy burdens as citizens of a great Empire. Money could not possibly be spared for such ornamentation as ships and guns and bodies of trained men. We could not afford it!

As I passed the corner of Agar Street a drunken cabdriver, driving two noisily intoxicated men in evening dress, brought his cab into collision with a gaunt, wolf-eyed man who had been scouring the gutter for scraps of food. He was one of an army prowling London's gutters at that moment: human wolves, questing for scraps of refuse meat. The space between each prowler was no more than a few yards. This particular wretch was knocked down by the cab, but not hurt. Cabby and his fares roared out drunken laughter. The horse was never checked.

But in the midst of their laughter one of the passengers threw out a coin, upon which the human wolf pounced like a bird of prey. I saw the glint of the coin. It was a sovereign; very likely the twentieth those men had spent that night. For that sum, four hundred of the gaunt, gutter-prowling wolves might have been fed and sheltered.

Entering Holborn I ran against a man I knew, named Wardle, one of the sub-editors of a Sunday newspaper, then on his way home from Fleet Street. Wardle was tired and sleepy, but stopped to exchange a few words of journalistic gossip.

"Rather sickening about the wind-up of the East Anglian Pageant," he said, "isn't it? Did you hear of it?"

I explained that I had not been in Fleet Street that night, and had heard nothing.

"Why, there was to be no end of a tumashi for the Saturday evening wind-up, you know, and we were featuring it. We sent a special man up yesterday to help the local fellow. Well, just as we'd got in about a couple of hundred words of his introductory stuff, word came through that the wires were interrupted, and not another blessed line did we get. I tell you there was some tall cursing done, and some flying around in the editorial 'fill-up' drawers. We were giving it first place — three columns. One blessing, we found the stoppage was general. No one else has got a line of East Anglian stuff to-night. Ours was the last word from the submerged city of Ipswich. But it really is rather an odd breakdown. No sign of rough weather; and, mind you there are

a number of different lines of communication. But they're all blocked, telegraph and telephone. Our chief tried to get through viâ the Continent, just to give us something to go on. But it was no go. Odd, isn't it?"

"Very," I agreed, as we turned; and I added, rather inanely: "One hears a lot about East Anglian coast erosion."

Wardle yawned and grinned.

"Yes, to be sure. Perhaps East Anglia is cruising down Channel by now. Or perhaps the Kaiser's landed an army corps and taken possession. That Mediterranean business on Tuesday was pretty pronounced cheek, you know, and, by all accounts, the result of direct orders from Potsdam. Only the Kaiser's bluff, I suppose, but I'm told it's taken most of the Channel Fleet down into Spanish waters."

I smiled at the activity of Wardle's journalistic imagination, and thought of the music-hall crowd.

"Ah, well," I said, "'They'll never go for England, because England's got the dibs'!"

"What ho!" remarked Wardle, with another yawn. And this time he was really off.

And so I walked home alone to my lodgings, and climbed into bed, thinking vaguely of Constance Grey, and what she would have thought of my night's work; this, as the long, palely glinting arms of the Sabbath dawn thrust aside the mantle of summer night from Bloomsbury.

XIII

THE DEMONSTRATION IN HYDE PARK

Winds of the World give answer! They are whimpering
to and fro —
And what should they know of England who only Eng-
land know? —
The poor little street-bred people that vapour and fume
and brag,
They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp at the
English flag. RUDYARD KIPLING.

AS was usually the case on the day following one of Beatrice's "fluffy" evenings, I descended to my never very tempting lodging-house breakfast on that Sunday morning feeling the reverse of cheerful, and much inclined to take the gloomiest view of everything life had to offer me.

Sunday was generally a melancholy day for me. It was my only day out of Fleet Street, and, though I had long since taken such steps as I thought I could afford toward transforming my bedroom into a sitting-room, there was nothing very comfortable or homelike about it. I had dropped the habit of churchgoing after the first few months of my London life, without any particular thought or intention, but rather, I think, as one kind of reflex action — a subconscious reflection of the views and habits of those among whom I lived and worked.

Hearing a newsboy crying a "special" edition of some paper, I threw up the window and bought a copy, across the area railings. It was the paper for which Wardle worked. I found in it no particular justification for any special issue, and, as a fact, the probability is the appearance of this edition was merely a device to increase circulation, suggested mainly by the fact that the ordinary issue had been delayed by the East Anglian telegraphic breakdown. Regarding this, I found the following item of editorial commentary:

"As is explained elsewhere, a serious breakdown of telegraphic communication has occurred between London and Harwich, Ipswich and East Anglia generally, as a result of which our readers are robbed of special despatches regarding last night's conclusion of the East Anglian Pageant. It is thought that the breakdown is due to some electrical disturbance of the atmosphere resulting in a fusion of wires.

"But as an example of the ridiculous lengths to which the national defence cranks will go in their hatching of alarmist reports, a rumour was actually spread in Fleet Street at an early hour this morning that this commonplace accident to the telegraph wires was caused by an invading German army. This ridiculous *canard* is reminiscent of some of the foolish scares which frightened our forefathers a little more than a century ago, when the Corsican terrorized Europe. But our rumour-mongers are too far out of date for this age. It is unfortunate that the advocates of militarism should receive parliamentary

support of any kind. The Opposition is weakly and insignificant enough in all conscience, without courting further unpopularity by floating British public feeling in this way, and encouraging the cranks among its following to bring ridicule upon the country.

"The absurd *canard* to which we have referred is maliciously ill-timed. It will doubtless be reported on the Continent, and may injure us there. But we trust our friends in Germany will do us the justice of recognizing at once that this is merely the work of an irresponsible and totally unrepresentative clique, and in no sort a reflection of any aspect of public feeling in this country. We are able to state with certainty that last Tuesday's regrettable incident in the Mediterranean has been satisfactorily and definitely closed. Admiral Blennerhaustein displayed characteristic German courtesy and generosity in his frank acceptance of the apology sent to him from Whitehall; and the report that our Channel Fleet had entered the Straits of Gibraltar is incorrect. A portion of the Channel Fleet had been cruising off the coast of the Peninsula, and is now on its way back to home waters. Our relations with His Imperial Majesty's Government in Berlin were never more harmonious, and such a *canard* as this morning's rumour of invasion is only worthy of mention for the sake of a demonstration of its complete absurdity. If, as was stated, the author of this puerile invention is a Navy League supporter, who reached London in a motor-car from Harwich soon after daylight this morning, our advice to him is to devote the rest

of the day to sleeping off the effects of an injudicious evening in East Anglia."

Failing the East Anglian Pageant, the paper's "first feature," I noticed, consisted of a lot of generously headed particulars regarding the big Disarmament Demonstration to be held in Hyde Park that afternoon. It seemed that this was to be a really big thing, and I decided to attend in the interests of *The Mass*. The President of the Local Government Board and three well-known members on the Government side of the House were to speak. The Demonstration had been organized by the National Peace Association for Disarmament and Social Reform, of which the Prime Minister had lately been elected President. Delegates, both German and English, of the Anglo-German Union had promised to deliver addresses. Among other well-known bodies who were sending representatives I saw mention of the Anti-Imperial and Free Tariff Society, the Independent English Guild, the Home Rule Association, the Free Trade League, and various Republican and Socialist bodies. The paper said some amusement was anticipated from a suggested counter demonstration proposed by a few Navy League enthusiasts; but that the police would take good care that no serious interruptions were allowed.

As the Demonstration was fixed for three o'clock in the afternoon, I decided to go up the river by steamboat to Kew after my late breakfast. It was a gloriously fine morning, and on the river I began to feel a little more cheerful. As we passed Battersea Park I thought of Beatrice, who always suffered

from severe depressions after her little outings. Her spirits were affected; in my case, restaurant food, inferior wine, and the breathing of vitiated air was paid for by nothing worse than a headache and a morning's discomfort.

(One of the curses of the time, which seemed to grow more acute as the habit of extravagance and the thirst for pleasure increased, was the outrageous adulteration of all food-stuffs, and more particularly of all alcoholic liquors, which prevailed not alone in the West End of London, but in every city. Home products could only be obtained in clubs and in the houses of the rich. Their quantity was insufficient to admit of their reaching the open markets. In the cities we lived entirely upon foreign products, and their adulteration had reached a most amazing limit of badness.)

My thought of Beatrice was brief that morning, but I continued during most of my little excursion to dwell upon my new friends in South Kensington. I wondered how Constance Grey spent Sunday in London, and whether the confinement of the town oppressed her after the spacious freedom of the South African life she had described to me. I remembered that I had promised to call upon her and her aunt very soon, and wandered whether that afternoon, after the Demonstration, would be too soon. I mentally decided that it would, but that I would go all the same.

And then, suddenly, as the steamer passed under Hammersmith Bridge, a thought went through me like cold steel:

"She will very soon return to that freer, wider life out there in South Africa."

How I hated the place. South Africa! I had always associated it with Imperialism, militarism — "empireism," as I called it in my own mind: the strange, outside interests, which one regarded as opposing home interests, social reform, and the like. Though I did not know that any political party considerations influenced me one atom, I was in reality, like nearly every one else at that time, mentally the slave and creature of party feeling, party tradition, party prejudice. But now I had a new cause for hating those remote uplands of Empire, those outside places.

Sitting under a tree in Kew Gardens, I had leisure in which to browse over the matter, and, upon reflection, I was astonished that this sudden thought of mine should have struck so shrewdly, so violently, into my peace of mind. I tried to neutralize its effect by reminding myself that I had met Constance Grey only twice; that she was in many ways outside my purview; that she was the intimate friend of people who had helped to make history, the special contributor to the *Times*, with her introductions to ex-Cabinet Ministers in England and her other relations with great people; that such a woman could never play an intimate part in my life. Her friendliness could not be the prelude to friendship with the assistant editor of *The Mass;* it probably meant no more than a courteous deference to John Crondall's whim, I told myself. But I would call at the South Kensington flat, certainly; it would be boorish to refrain,

and — there was no denying I should have been mightily perturbed if any valid reason had appeared against my going to see Constance Grey after doing my duty by the Demonstration.

The newsboys were putting a good deal of feeling into their crying of special editions when I reached the streets again; but I was not inclined to waste further pence upon the *Sunday News*' moralizings over the evolution of *canards*. I took a mess of some adulterated pottage at a foreign restaurant in Notting Hill, as I had no wish to return to Bloomsbury before the Demonstration. The waiter — either a Swiss or a German — asked me:

"Vad you sink, sare, of ze news from ze country?"

I asked him what it was, and he handed me a fresh copy of the *Sunday News*, headed: "Special Edition. Noon."

"By Jove!" I thought; "no Sunday dinner for Wardle! They couldn't have printed this in the small hours."

But the only new matter in this issue was a short announcement, headed in poster type, as follows:

"EAST ANGLIA'S ISOLATION
RAILWAY COMMUNICATION STOPPED
STRANGE SUPPORT OF INVASION CANARD
IS THIS A TORY HOAX?
(SPECIAL)

The preposterous rumour of a German invasion of England is receiving mysterious support. We hear from a reliable source that some Imperialist and Navy

League cranks have organized a gigantic hoax by way of opposition to the Disarmament Demonstration. If the curious breakdown of communication with the east coast does prove to be the work of political fanatics, we think, and hope, that these gentry may shortly be convinced, in a manner they are never likely to forget, that, even in this land of liberty, the crank is not allowed to interfere with the transaction of public business.

"No trains have reached Liverpool Street from the northeast this morning, and communication cannot be established beyond Chelmsford. Whatever the cause of this singular breakdown may be, our readers will soon know it, for, in order finally to dispel any hint of credence which may be attached in some quarters to the absurd invasion report, we have already despatched two representatives in two powerful motor-cars, northeastward from Brentwood, with instructions to return to that point and telegraph full particulars directly they can discover the cause of the stoppage of communication.

"Further special editions will be issued when news is received from East Anglia."

"Yes," I said to the waiter; "it's a curious affair."

"You believe him, sare — zat Shermany do it?"

"Eh? No; certainly not. Do you?"

"Me? Oh, sare, I don' know nozzing. Vaire shstrong, sare, ze Sherman Armay."

The fellow's face annoyed me in some way. It, and his grins and gesticulations, had a sinister seeming. My trade brought me into contact with so

many low-class aliens. I told myself I was getting insular and prejudiced, and resumed my meal with more thought for myself and my tendencies and affairs than for the East Anglian business. I have wondered since what the waiter thought about while I ate; whether he thought of England, Germany, and of myself, as representing the British citizen. But, to be sure, for aught I know, his thoughts may have been ordered for him from Berlin.

The Demonstration drew an enormous concourse of people to Hyde Park. The weather being perfect, a number of people made an outing of the occasion, and one saw whole groups of people who clearly came from beyond Whitechapel, the Borough, Shepherd's Bush, and Islington. As had been anticipated, a few well-dressed people endeavoured to run a counter-demonstration under a Navy League banner; but their following was absurdly small, and the crowd gave them nothing but ridicule and contempt.

The President of the Local Government Board received a tremendous ovation. For some minutes after his first appearance that enormous crowd sang, "He's a jolly good fellow!" with great enthusiasm. Then, when this member of the Government at last succeeded in getting as far as: "Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen," some one started the song with the chorus containing the words: "They'll never go for England, because England's got the dibs." This spread like a line of fire in dry grass, and in a moment the vast crowd was rocking to the jingling rhythm of the song, the summer air quivering to the volume of its thousand-throated voice.

The President of the Local Government Board had been rather suspected of tuft-hunting recently, and his appearance in the stump orator's rôle, and in the cause of disarmament, was wonderfully popular. In his long career as Labour agitator, Socialist, and Radical, he had learned to know the popular pulse remarkably well; and now he responded cleverly to the call of the moment. His vein was that of the heavy, broad bludgeoning sarcasm which tickles a crowd, and his theme was not the wickedness, but the stupidity and futility of all "Jingoism," "spread-eagleism," "tall-talk," and "gold-lace bunk-combe."

"I am told my honourable friends of the opposition," he said, with an ironical bow in the direction of the now folded Navy League banner, "have played some kind of a practical joke in the eastern counties to-day. Well, children will be children; but I am afraid there will have to be spankings if half that I hear is true. They have tried to frighten you into abandoning this Demonstration with a pretended invasion of England. Well, my friends, it does not look to me as though their invasion had affected this Demonstration very seriously. I seem to fancy I see quite a number of people gathered together here. (It is estimated that over sixty thousand people were trying to hear his words.) But all I have to say on this invasion question is just this: If our friends from Germany have invaded East Anglia, let us be grateful for their enterprise, and, as a nation of shopkeepers should, let us make as much as we can out of 'em. But don't let us forget our hospitality.

If our neighbours have dropped in in a friendly way, why, let's be sure we've something hot for supper. Perhaps a few sausages wouldn't be taken amiss. (The laughter and applause was so continuous here that for some moments nothing further could be heard.) No, my friends, this invasion hoax should now be placed finally upon the retired list. It has been on active service now since the year 1800, and I really think it's time our spread-eagle friends gave us a change. Let me for one moment address you in my official capacity, as your servant and a member of the Government. This England of ours is about as much in danger of being invaded as I am of becoming a millionaire, and those of you ——"

The speaker's next words never reached me, being drowned by a great roar of laughter and applause. Just then I turned round to remonstrate with a man who was supporting himself upon my right shoulder. I was on the edge of the one narrow part of the crowd, against some iron railings. As I turned I noticed a number of boys tearing along in fan-shaped formation, and racing toward the crowd from the direction of Marble Arch. My eyes followed the approaching boys, and I forgot the fellow who had been plaguing me. The lads were all carrying bundles of papers, and now, as they drew nearer, I could see and hear that they were yelling as they ran.

"Another special edition," I thought. "No sort of a Sunday for poor Wardle."

The President of the Local Government Board had resumed his speech, and I could hear his clean-cut words distinctly. He had a good incisive delivery.

Across his words now the hoarse yell of an approaching newsboy smote upon my ears:

"Extry speshul! Sixpence! German Army Corps in England! Speshul! Invashen er Sufferk! Speshul — sixpence! German Army Corps — sixpence! Invashen!"

"By Jove!" I thought. "That's rough on our disarmament feature from Herr Mitmann!"

I very well remember that that precisely was my thought.

XIV

THE NEWS

He could not hear Death's rattle at the door,
He was so busy with his sottishness. — TURNER.

THE chance of my position on the edge of the crowd nearest to Marble Arch caused me to be among those who secured a paper, and at the comparatively modest price of sixpence. Two minutes later, I saw a member of the committee of the Demonstration hand over half-a-crown for one of the same limp sheets, all warm and smeary from the press. And in two more minutes the newsboys (there must have been fifty of them) were racing back to Marble Arch, feverishly questing further supplies, and, I suppose, reckoning as they ran their unaccustomed gains.

The news, mostly in poster type, was only a matter of a few lines of comment, and a few more lines of telegraphic despatch from Brentwood:

"Telegraphic communication with Chelmsford has now been cut off, but one of our special representatives, who succeeded in obtaining a powerful six-cylinder motor-car, has reached Brentwood, after a racing tour to the northeastward. We publish his despatch under all possible reserve. He is a journalist of high repute, but we venture to say with confi-

dence that he has evidently been imposed upon by the promotors of the most abominably wicked hoax and fraud ever perpetrated by criminal fanatics upon a trusting public. We have very little doubt that a number of these rabid advocates of that spirit of militarism to which the British public will never for one moment submit, will be cooling their heated brains in prison cells before the night is out."

And then followed the despatch from Brentwood, which said:

"Roads, railways, communication of all kinds absolutely blocked. Coastal regions of Suffolk and South Norfolk, and possibly Essex, are occupied by German soldiers. A cyclist from near Harwich says the landing was effected last evening, the most elaborate preparations and arrangements having been made beforehand. My car was fired at near Colchester. Chelmsford is now occupied by German cavalry, cyclist and motor corps. Have not heard of any loss of life, but whole country is panic-stricken. Cannot send further news. Telegraph office closed to public, being occupied in official business."

That was all. As my eyes rose from the blurred surface of the news-sheet the picture of the crowd absorbed me, like a stage-spectacle. There were from forty to sixty thousand people assembled, of all ages and classes. Among them were perhaps one thousand, perhaps two thousand, copies of the newspaper. Some ten thousand people were craning necks and straining eyes to read those papers. The rest were making short, hoarse, frequently meaningless ejaculations.

I saw one middle-aged man, who might have been a grocer, and a deacon in his place of worship, fold up his paper after reading it and thrust it, for future reference, in the tail-pocket of his sombre Sunday coat. But his neighbours in the crowd would not have that. A number of outstretched hands suddenly surrounded him. I saw his face pale. "Give us a look!" was all the sense I grasped from a score of exclamations. The grocer's paper was in fragments on the grass ten seconds later, and its destroyers were reaching out in other directions.

"It's abominable," I heard the grocer muttering to himself; and his hands shook as though he had the palsy.

But in other cases the papers passed whole from hand to hand, and their holders read the news aloud. I think the entire crowd had grasped the gist of it inside of four minutes; and their exclamatory comments were extraordinary, grotesque.

"My God!" and "My Gawd!" reached my ears frequently. But they were less representative than were short, sharp bursts of laughter, harsh and staccato, like a dog's bark, and, it may be, half-hysterical. And, piercing these snaps of laughter, one heard the curious, contradictory yapping of such sentences as: "I sye; 'ow about them 'ot sossiges?" "'Taint true, Bill, is it?" "Disgraceful business; perfectly disgraceful!" "Wot price the Kaiser? Not arf!" "Anything to sell the papers, you know!" "What? No. Jolly lot of rot!" "Johnny get yer gun, get yer gun!" "Some one must be punished for this. Might have caused a

panic, you know." "True? Good Lord, no! What would our Navy be doing?" "Well, upon my word, I don't know." "Nice business for the fish trade!" "Well, if that's it, I shall take the children down to their Aunt Rebecca's." "Wot price Piccadilly an' Regent Street to-night?" "Come along, my dear; let's get home out of this." "Absolute bosh, my dear boy, from beginning to end — doing business with 'em every day o' my life!" And then a hoarse snatch of song: "'They'll never go for England' — not they! What ho! 'Because England's got the dibs!'"

Suddenly then, above and across the thousand-voiced small talk, came the trained notes of the voice of the President of the Local Government Board.

"My friends, the whole story is a most transparent fraud. It's a shameful hoax. I tell you the thing is physically and morally impossible. It couldn't have been done in the time; and it is all a lie, anyhow. I beg to propose a hearty vote of thanks to our chairman for ——"

The crowd had listened attentively enough to the old agitator's comment on the news. They liked his assurances on that point. But they were in no mood for ceremonial. Thousands were already straggling across the grass toward Marble Arch and down to Hyde Park Corner. The speaker's further words were drowned in a confused hubbub of applause, cheers, laughter, shouts of "Are we downhearted?" raucous answers in the negative, and cries of "Never mind the chairman!" and "He's a jolly good fellow!"

In ten minutes that part of the park seemed to have been stripped naked, and the few vehicles, tables, and little platforms which had formed the centre of the Demonstration appeared, like the limbs of a tree suddenly bereft of foliage, looking curiously small and bare. I am told that restaurants and refreshment places did an enormous trade during the next few hours. When the public-houses opened they were besieged, and, in many cases, closed again after a few hours, sold out.

For my part, I made at once, and without thinking, for Constance Grey's flat in South Kensington. The crowds in the streets were not only much larger, but in many ways different from the usual run of Sunday crowds. The people wore their Sunday clothes, but they had doffed the Sunday manners and air. There was more of a suggestion of Saturday night in the streets; the suggestion that a tremendous number of people were going to enjoy a "spree" of some kind. A kind of noisy hilarity, combined with a general desire for cigars, drinks, singing, and gaiety, seemed to be ruling the people.

At the upper end of Sloane Street a German band was blaring out the air of "The Holy City," and people stood about in groups laughing and chatting noisily. The newspaper boys had some competitors now, and the Bank Holiday flavour of the streets was added to by a number of lads and girls who had appeared from nowhere, with all sorts of valueless commodities for sale, such as peacocks' feathers, paper fans, and streamers of coloured paper.

Why these things should have been wanted I can-

not say; but their sellers knew their business very well. The demand was remarkably brisk. Indeed, I noticed one of three young men, who walked abreast, purchase quite a bunch of the long feathers, only to drop them beside the curb a few moments later, whence another vendor promptly plucked them, and sold them again. I suppose that by this time the vast majority of the people had no doubt whatever about the news being a monstrous hoax; but there was no blinking the fact that the public had been strongly moved.

It was with a distinct sense of relief that I learned from a servant that Miss Grey was at home — had just come in, as a matter of fact. It was as though I had some important business to transact with this girl from South Africa, with her brilliant dark eyes, and alert, thoughtful expression. I felt that it would have been serious if she should have been away, if I had missed her. It was not until I heard her step outside the door of the little drawing-room into which I had been shown, that I suddenly became conscious that I had no business whatever with Constance Grey, and that this call, on Sunday, within forty-eight hours of my dining there, might perhaps be adjudged a piece of questionable taste.

A minute later, and, if I had thought again of the matter at all, I should have known that Constance Grey wasted no time over any such petty considerations. She entered to me with a set, grave face, taking my hand mechanically, as though too much preoccupied for such ceremonies.

"What do you think of the news?" she said, with-

out a word of preliminary greeting. I felt more than a little abashed at this; for, truth to tell, I really had given no serious thought to the news. I had observed its reception by the public as a spectator might. But, in the first place, I had been early warned that it was all a hoax; and then, too, like so many of my contemporaries, I was without the citizen feeling altogether, so far as national interests were concerned. I had grown to regard citizenship as exclusively a matter of domestic politics and social progress, municipal affairs, and the like. I never gave any thought to our position as a people and a nation in relation to foreign Powers.

"Oh, well," I said, "it's an extraordinary business, isn't it? I have just come from the Demonstration in Hyde Park. It was practically squashed by the arrival of the special editions. The people seemed pretty considerably muddled about it, so I suppose those who arranged it all may be said to have scored their point."

"So you don't believe it?"

"Well, I believe it is generally admitted to be a gigantic hoax, is it not?"

"But, my dear Mr. Mordan, how — how wonderful English people are! You, your own self; what do *you* think about it? But forgive me for heckling. Won't you sit down? Or will you come into the study? Aunt is in there."

We went into the study, a cheerful, bright room, with low wicker chairs, and a big, littered writing-table.

"Mr. Mordan doesn't believe it," said Constance Grey, when I had shaken hands with her aunt.

"Doesn't he?" said that strong, plain-spoken woman. "Well, I fancy there are a good many more by the same way of thinking, who'll have their eyes opened pretty widely by this time to-morrow."

"Then you take the whole thing seriously?" I asked them.

Somehow, my own thoughts had become active in the presence of these women, and were racing over everything that I had seen and heard that day, from the moment of my chat with Wardle, before sunrise, in Holborn.

"I don't see any other way to take it," said Mrs. Van Homrey, with laconic emphasis. "Do you?" she added.

"Well, you see, I did not begin by taking your view. My first word of it was just before dawn this morning, from a newspaper man in Holborn; and, somehow — well, you know, the general idea seems to be that the whole thing is an elaborate joke worked up by the Navy League, or somebody, as a counter-stroke to the Disarmament Demonstration — to teach us a lesson, and all that, you know."

I had to remind myself that I was addressing two ladies who were sure to be whole-hearted supporters of the Navy League and all other Imperialist organizations. Constance Grey seemed to me to be appraising me. I fancied those brilliant eyes of hers were looking right into me with grave criticism, and discovering me unworthy. My heart sickened at the thought. I should have been more distressed had not

a vague, futile anger crept into my mind. After all, I thought, what right had this girl from South Africa to criticize me? I was a man. I knew England better than she did. I was a journalist of experience. Bah! My twopenny thoughts drooped and fainted as they rose.

"But perhaps you are better informed?" I said, weakly. "Perhaps you have other information?"

Constance Grey looked straight at me, and as I recall her gaze now, it was almost maternal in its yearning gravity.

"I think it's going to be a lesson all right," she said. "What cuts me to the heart is the fear that it may have come too late."

Never have I heard such gravity in a young woman's voice. Her words overpowered me almost by the weight of prescient meaning she gave them. They reached me as from some solemn sanctuary, a fount of inspiration.

"We haven't any special information," said Mrs. Van Homrey. "We have only read, like every one else, that East Anglia is occupied by German soldiers, landed last night; that the East Anglian Pageant has been made the cloak of most elaborate preparations for weeks past; that the Mediterranean incident last week was a deliberate scheme to draw the Channel Fleet south; and that the whole dreadful business has succeeded so far, like — like perfect machinery; like the thing it is: the outcome of perfect discipline and long, deliberate planning. We have heard no more; but the only hoaxing that I can see is done by the purblind people who have

made the public think it a hoax — and that is not conscious hoaxing, of course; they are too bemuddled with their disarmament farce for that."

"More tragedy than farce, aunt, I'm afraid," said Constance Grey. And then, turning to me, she said: "We lunched at General Penn Dicksee's to-day; and they have no doubt about the truth of the news. The General has motored down to Aldershot. They will begin some attempt at mobilizing at once, I believe. But it seemed impossible to get into touch with headquarters. All the War Office people are away for the week-end. In fact, they say the Minister's in Ipswich, and can't get away. General Penn Dicksee says they have practically no material to work with for any immediate mobilization purposes. He says that under the present system nothing can be done in less than a week. He thinks the most useful force will be the sailors from the Naval Barracks. But I should suppose they would be wanted for the ships — if we have any ships left fit for sea. The General thinks there may be a hundred thousand German soldiers within twenty or thirty miles of London by to-morrow."

"Yes," said Mrs. Van Homrey, "it doesn't seem easy to take it any other way than seriously; not if one's on the British side. And, for the matter of that, if I know the Teuton, they are taking it pretty seriously in East Anglia, and — and in Berlin."

And up till now, I had been thinking of the extra Sunday work for Wardle, and the way they had started selling peacocks' feathers and things, in the streets!

XV

SUNDAY NIGHT IN LONDON

* * * * * *

"Ah," they cry, "Destiny,
Prolong the present!
Time, stand still here!"

The prompt stern Goddess
Shakes her head, frowning;
Time gives his hour-glass
Its due reversal;
Their hour is gone. — MATTHEW ARNOLD.

I STAYED to dinner at the flat in South Kensington, and after dinner, when I spoke of leaving, Constance Grey asked if I would care to accompany her into Blackfriars. She wanted to call at Printing House Square, and ascertain what further news had arrived. The implied intimacy and friendliness of the suggestion gave me a pleasurable thrill; it came as something of a reinstatement for me, and compensated for much. Constance Grey's views of me had in some way become more important to me than anything else. I was even now more concerned about that than about the news.

We made the journey by omnibus. I suggested a cab, as in duty bound, but, doubtless with a thought of my finances, my companion insisted upon the

cheaper way. We had some trouble to get seats, but found them at last on a motor omnibus bound for Whitechapel. The streets were densely crowded, and the Bank Holiday spirit which I had remarked before was now general, and much more marked.

"It reminds me exactly of 'Mafeking Night,'" I said, referring to that evening of the South African war during which London waxed drunk upon the news of the relief of Mafeking.

"Was it as bad even then?" said my companion. And her question showed me, what I might otherwise have overlooked, that a good deal of water had passed under the bridges since South African war days. We had been a little ashamed of our innocent rowdiness over the Mafeking relief. We had become vastly more inconsistent and less sober since then. I think the "Middle Class Music Halls" had taken their share in the progress, by breaking down much of the staid reserve and self-restraint of the respectable middle class. But, of course, one sees now that the rapid growth among us of selfish irresponsibility and repudiation of national obligations was the root cause of that change in public behaviour which I saw clearly enough, once it had been suggested to me by Constance Grey's question.

I saw that, among the tens of thousands of noisy promenaders of both sexes who filled the streets, and impeded traffic at all crossings, the class which had always been rowdily inclined was now far more rowdy, and that its ranks were reinforced, doubled in strength, by recruits from a class which, a few years before, had been proverbially noted for its decorous

and decent reserve. And this was Sunday Night. I learned afterwards that the clergy had preached to practically empty churches. A man we met in *The Times* office told us of this, and my companion's comment was:

"Yes, even their religion has less meaning for them than their pleasure; and, with religion a dead letter, the spirit that won Trafalgar and armed the Thames against Napoleon, must be dead and buried."

The news we received at *The Times* office was extraordinary. It seemed there was no longer room for the smallest doubt that a large portion of East Anglia was actually occupied by a German army. Positive details of information could not be obtained.

"The way the coastal districts have been hermetically sealed against communication, and the speed and thoroughness with which the occupation has been accomplished, will remain, I believe, the most amazing episode in the history of warfare," said the solemn graybeard, to whom I had been presented by Constance Grey. (If he had known that I was the assistant editor of *The Mass*, I doubt if this Mr. Poole-Smith would have consented to open his mouth in my presence. But my obscurity and his importance combined to shelter me, and I was treated with confidence as the friend of a respected contributor.)

"Already we know enough to be certain that the enemy has received incalculably valuable assistance from within. I am afraid there will presently be only too much evidence of the blackest kind of treachery from British subjects, members of one or other among the anti-National coteries. But in the mean-

time, we hear of extraordinary things accomplished by aliens employed in this country, many of them in official capacities. We have learned through the Great Eastern Railway Company, and through one or two shipping houses, of huge consignments of stores, and, I make very little doubt, of munitions of war. The thing must have been in train on this side for many months — possibly for years. Here, for instance, is an extraordinary item, which is hardly likely to be only coincidence: Out of one hundred postmasters within a sixty-mile radius of Harwich, eighty-one have obtained their positions within the last two years, and of those sixty-nine bear names which indicate German nationality or extraction. But that is only one small item. An analysis of the Eastern Railway employees, and of the larger business firms between here and Ipswich, will tell a more startling tale, unless I am greatly mistaken."

But to me, I think the part of the news we gathered which seemed most startling was the fact that a tiny special issue of *The Times*, then being sold in the streets, contained none of the information given to us, but only a cautiously worded warning to the public that the news received from East Anglia had been grossly exaggerated, and that no definite importance should be attached to it, until authoritative information, which would appear in the first ordinary issue of *The Times* on Monday, had been considered. It was all worded very pompously, and vaguely, in a deprecating tone, which left it open for the reader to conclude that *The Times* supported the generally accepted hoax theory. And we found that all the

daily papers of repute and standing had issued similar bulletins to the public. Asked about this, our grave informant stroked his whiskers, and alluded distantly to "policy decided upon in consultation with representatives of the Crown."

"For one thing, you see, London is extraordinarily full of Germans, though we have already learned that vast numbers of them went to swell the attendance at the East Anglian Pageant, and may now, for all we know, be under arms. Then, too, anything in the nature of a panic on a large scale, and that before the authorities have decided upon any definite plan of action, would be disastrous. Unfortunately our reports from correspondents at the various southern military depôts are all to the effect that mobilization will be a slow business. As you know, the regulars in England have been reduced to an almost negligible minimum, and the mobilization of the 'Haldane Army' involves the slow process of drawing men out of private life into the field. What is worse, it means in many cases Edinburgh men reporting themselves at Aldershot, and south-country men reporting themselves in the north. And then their practical knowledge so far leaves them simply men in the street."

"But the great trouble is that the Government and the official heads of departments have been at loggerheads this long time past, and now are far from arriving at any definite policy of procedure. Of course, the majority of the leaders are out of town. You will understand that every possible precaution must be taken to avoid unduly alarming the public, or pro-

voking panic. We hope to be able to announce something definite in the morning. The sympathy of all the Powers will undoubtedly be with us, for every known tenet of international law has been outraged by this entirely unprovoked invasion."

"And what do you think will be the practical effect and use of their sympathy, Mr. Poole-Smith?" asked Constance Grey.

"Well," said our solemn friend, caressing his whiskers, "as to its *practical* effect, my dear Miss Grey, why, I am afraid that in such bitter matters as these the practical value of sympathy, or of international law, is — er — cannot very easily be defined."

"Quite so. Exactly as I thought. It would not make one pennyworth of difference, Mr. Poole-Smith. The British public is on the eve of learning the meaning of brave old Lord Roberts's teaching: that no amount of diplomacy, of 'cordiality,' of treaties, or of anything else in the répertoire of the disarmament party, can ever counterbalance the uses of the rifle in the hands of disciplined men. Their twentieth-century notions will avail us pitifully little against the advance of the Kaiser's legions. The brotherhood of man and the sacred arts of commerce and peace will have little in the way of reply to machine guns. If only our people could have had even one year of universal military training! But no; they would not even pay for the maintenance of such defence force as they had when it took three years to beat the Boers; and now — didn't some man write a book called 'The Defenceless Isles'? We live in them."

"But that is not the worst, Miss Grey," said our

friend. "These are now not only defenceless, but invaded isles."

"Ah! How long before they become surrendered isles, Mr. Poole-Smith?"

"The answer to that is with a higher Power than any in Printing House Square, Miss Grey. But, let me say this, in strict confidence, please. You wonder, and perhaps are inclined to condemn our — well, our reticence about this news. Do you know my fear? It is that if, in its present mood, suddenly, the British public, and more especially the London public, were allowed to realize clearly both what has happened in East Anglia, and the monumental unfitness of our authorities and defences to meet and cope with such an emergency — that then we should see England torn in sunder by the most terrible revolution of modern times. We should see statesmen hanging from lamp-posts in Whitehall; 'The Destroyers' would be destroyed; the Crown would be in danger, as well as its unworthy servants. And the Kaiser's machine-like army would find it had invaded a ravaged inferno, occupied by an infuriated populace hopelessly divided against itself, and already in the grip of the deadliest kind of strife. That, I think, is a danger to be guarded against, so far as it is possible, at all or any cost."

One could not but be impressed by this rather pompous, but sincere and earnest man's words.

"I see that very clearly, Mr. Poole-Smith," said Constance Grey. "But can the thing be done? Can the public be deluded for more than a few hours?"

"Not altogether, my dear young lady, not alto-

gether. But, as we learn early in journalism, life is made up of compromises. We hope to school them to it, and give them the truth gradually, with as little shock as may be."

Soon after this we left the great office, and, as we passed out into the crowded streets, Constance Grey said to me:

"Thank God, *The Times* managed to win clear of the syndicate's clutches when it did. There is moral and strength of purpose there now. I think the Press is behaving finely — if only the public can be made to do as well. But, oh, 'The Destroyers' — what a place they have cut out for themselves in history!"

But for the glorious summer weather, one could have fancied Christmas at hand from the look of Ludgate Hill. From the Circus we took a long look up at Paul's great dome, massive and calm against the evening sky. But between it and us was a seething crowd, promenading at the rate of a mile an hour, and served by two solid lines of vendors of useless trifles and fruit, and so forth.

Crossing Ludgate Circus, as we fought our way to the steps of an omnibus, was a band of youths linked arm in arm, and all apparently intoxicated. There must have been forty in a line. As they advanced, cutting all sorts of curious capers, they bawled, in something like unison, the melancholy music-hall refrain:

"They'll never go for England, because England's got the dibs."

The crowd caught up the jingle as fire licks up grass, and narrow Fleet Street echoed to the mon-

strous din of their singing. I began to feel anxious about getting Constance safely to her flat. Six out of the fourteen people on the top of our omnibus were noticeably and noisily tipsy.

"Ah me, Dick, where, where is their British reserve? How I hate that beloved word cosmopolitan!"

She looked at me, and perhaps that reminded her of something.

"Forgive my familiarity," she said. "John Crondall spoke of you as Dick Mordan. It's rather a way we have — out there."

I do not remember my exact reply, but it earned me the friendly short name from her for the future; and, with England tumbling about our ears, for aught we knew, that, somehow, made me curiously happy. But it was none the less with a sigh of relief that I handed her in at the outer door of the mansions in which their flat was situated. We paused for a moment at the stairs' foot, the first moment of privacy we had known that evening, and the last, I thought, with a recollection of Mrs. Van Homrey waiting in the flat above.

I know I was deeply moved. My heart seemed full to bursting. Perhaps the great news of that day affected me more than I knew. But yet it seemed I had no words, or very few. I remember I touched the sleeve of her dress with my finger-tips. What I said was:

"You know I am — you know I am at your orders, don't you?"

And she smiled, with her beautiful, sensitive mouth,

while the light of grave watching never flickered in her eyes.

"Yes, Dick; and thank you!" she said, as we began to mount the stairs.

Yet I was still the assistant editor of *The Mass* — Clement Blaine's right hand.

XVI

A PERSONAL REVELATION

The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted; they have torn me, and I bleed.
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.
BYRON.

THAT Sunday night was not one of London's black nights that have been so often described. The police began to be a little sharp with the people after nine or ten o'clock, and by midnight the streets were getting tolerably clear. For the great majority, I believe it had been a day of more or less pleasurable excitement and amusement. For the minority, who were better informed, it was a day and night of curious bewilderment and restless anxiety.

I looked in at several newspaper offices on my way home from South Kensington, but found that subordinate members of the staffs had no information to give, and that their superiors maintained an attitude of strict reticence. As I passed the dark windows of my own office I thought of our "feature" for the coming week: the demand for disarmament, in order that naval and military expenditure might be diverted into labour reform channels; Herr Mitmann's voluble assurances of the friendliness of the German people; of the ability and will of the German Socialists

to make German aggression impossible, for the sake of their brother workers in England.

I thought of these things, and wished I could spurn under foot my connection with *The Mass*. Then, sitting at the window of my little bed-sitting-room in Bloomsbury, I looked into my petty finances. If I left Clement Blaine I had enough to subsist upon for six or eight weeks. It was a risky business. Then I pictured myself casually mentioning to Constance Grey that I was no longer connected with *The Mass*. I fancied that I saw the bright approval in her eyes. Before blowing my light out, I had composed the little speech to Blaine which, in the morning, should set a period to our connection.

And then I thought of Beatrice. It was barely twenty-four hours since we had parted beside Battersea Park (though it seemed more like twenty-four days), and recollection showed me Beatrice in her rather rumpled finery, with the bleakness of the gray hour that follows such pleasures as most appealed to her, beginning to steal over her handsome face, sapping its warm colour, thinning and sharpening its ripe, smooth contours. Beatrice would pout when she heard of my leaving her father. The thought showed me her full red lips, and the little even white teeth they so often disclosed.

The curves of Beatrice's mouth were of a kind that have twisted many men's lives awry; and those men have thought straightness well lost for such red lips. Yes, Beatrice was good to look upon. She had a way of throwing her head back, and showing the smooth, round whiteness of her throat when she laughed, that

had thrilled me time and again. And how often, and how gaily she laughed.

In the midst of a picture of Beatrice, laughing at me across a restaurant table with a raised glass in her hand, I had a shadowy vision of Constance Grey beside the foot of the stairs in South Kensington. There was no laughter in her face. I had gathered, when I dined there, that Constance did not care for wine. She had said: "I don't care for anything that makes me feel as though I couldn't work if I wanted to." How Beatrice would have scoffed at that! And then, how Constance would have smiled over Beatrice's ideals — her "fluffy" evenings — in a kind of regretful, wondering way; almost as she had smiled when she first called me "Dick," in asking what had become of our staid English reserve; as she watched the noisy crowd in Fleet Street, singing its silly doggerel about England's security and England's "dibs."

And then, suddenly, my picture-making thoughts swept out across low Essex flats to the only part of East Anglia with which I was familiar, and gave me a vision of burning farmhouses, and terror-smitten country-folk fleeing blindly before a hail of bullets, and the pitiless advance of legions of fair-haired men in long coats of a kind of roan-gray, buttoned across the chest with bright buttons arranged to suggest the inward curve to an imaginary waist-line. The faces of the soldiers were all the same; they all had the face of Herr Mitmann of Stettin. And a hot wave of angry resentment and hatred of these machine-like invaders of a peaceful unprotected

countryside pulsed through my veins. Could they dare — here on English soil? My fists clenched under the bed-clothes. If it was true, by heavens, there was work for Englishmen toward!

My blood was hot at the thought. It was perhaps the first swelling of a patriotic emotion I had known; the first hint of any larger citizenship than that which claims and demands, without thought of giving. And, immediately, it was succeeded by a sharp chill, a chill that ushered me into one of the bitterest moments of humiliation that I can remember. The thought accompanying that chill was this:

"What can you do? What are you fit for? What boy's part, even, can you take, though the roof were being burned over your mother's head? What of Constance, or Beatrice? Could you strike a blow for either? Work for Englishmen, forsooth! Yes, for those of them who have ever learned a man's part in such work. But you — you have never had a gun in your hand. What have you done? You have poured out for your weekly wage so many thousands of words; words meaning — what? Why, they have meant what the roadside beggar means: 'Give! Give! Give!' They have urged men to demand more from the State, and give the State nothing; to rob the State of even its defences, for the sake of adding to their own immediate ease. And you have ridiculed, as a survival of barbarous times, the efforts of such men as the brave old Field Marshal who gave his declining years to the thankless task of urging England to make some effort of preparation to fend off just that very crisis which has now come upon her,

and found her absolutely unprepared. That is how you have earned your right to live, a citizen of the freest country in the world, a subject of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. And when you have had leisure and money to spend, you have devoted it to overeating and drinking, and helping to fill the tills of alien parasites in Soho. That has been your part. And now, now that the fatal crisis has arrived, you, whose qualification is that you can wield the pen of a begging letter-writer, who is also scurrilous and insolent — you lie in bed and clench your useless hands, and prate of work for Englishmen!"

That was the thought that came to me with a sudden chill that night; and I suppose I was one of the earliest among millions doomed to writhe under the impotent shame of such a thought. I shall never forget that night in my Bloomsbury lodging. It was my ordeal of self-revelation. I suppose I slept a little toward morning; but I rose early with a kind of vague longing to escape from the company of the personality my thought had shown me in the night.

It is natural that the awakening of an individual should be a more speedy process than the awakening of a people — a nation. I regard my early rising on that Monday morning as the beginning of my first real awakening to life as an Englishman. I had still far to go — I had not even crossed the threshold as yet.

XVII

ONE STEP FORWARD

Thy trust, thy honours, these were great; the greater now thy shame, for thou hast proved both unready and unfit, unworthy offspring of a noble sire! — MERROW'S *Country Tales.*

FIVE minutes after Clement Blaine reached the office of *The Mass* that morning, he had lost the services of his assistant editor, and I felt that I had taken one step upward from a veritable quagmire of humiliation.

Blaine was almost too excited about the news of the day to pay much heed to my little speech of resignation. The morning paper to which he subscribed — a Radical journal of pronounced tone — had observed far less reticence than most of its contemporaries, and, in its desire to lend sensational interest to its columns, had not minimized in any way the startling character of such intelligence as it had received.

"The bloodthirsty German devils!" said Blaine, the erstwhile apostle of internationalism and the socialistic brotherhood of man. "By God, the Admiralty and the War Office ought to swing for this! Here are we taxed out of house and home to support their wretched armies and navies, and German soldiers marching on London, they say, with never a sign of a hand raised to oppose 'em — damn them!

Nice time you choose to talk of leaving. By God, Mordan, you may be leaving from against a wall with a bullet through your head, next thing you know. These German devils don't wear kid gloves, I fancy. They're not like our tin-pot army. Army! — we haven't got one — lot of gold-laced puppets!"

That was how Clement Blaine was moved by the news. Last week: "Bloated armaments," "huge battalions of idle men eating the heart out of the nation through its revenues." This week, we had no army, and because of it the Admiralty and the War Office ought to "swing." In Blaine's ravings I had my foretaste of public opinion on the crisis.

On the previous day I had listened to a prominent Member of Parliament urging that our children should be preserved from the contamination of contact with those who taught the practice of the "hellish art" of shooting.

The leading daily papers of this Monday morning admitted the central fact that England had been invaded during Saturday night, and even allowed readers to assume that portions of the eastern counties were then occupied by "foreign" troops. But they used the word "raid" in place of "invasion," and generally qualified it with such a word as "futile." The general tone was that a Power with whom we had believed ourselves to be upon friendly terms had been guilty of rash and provocative action toward us, which it would speedily be made to regret. It was an insult, which would be promptly avenged; full atonement for which would be demanded and obtained at once. It was even suggested that some

tragic misunderstanding would be found to lie at the root of the whole business; and in any case, things were to be set right without delay. One journal, the *Standard*, did go so far as to say that the British public was likely to be forced now into learning at great cost a lesson which had been offered daily as a free gift since the opening of the century, and as steadily repudiated or ignored.

"Two things it should teach England," said this journal; "never to invite insult and contempt by a repetition of Sunday's Disarmament Demonstration or enunciation of its fallacious and dangerous teaching; and the necessity for paying instant heed to the warnings of the advocates of universal military training for purposes of home defence."

But at that time the nicknames of the "The Imperialist Banner" and "The Patriotic Pulpit," applied by various writers and others to this great newspaper, were scornful names, applied with opprobrious intent; and London was still full of people whose only comment upon this sufficiently badly-needed warning would be: "Oh, of course, the *Standard!*"

But the policy of reticence, though I have no doubt that it did save London from some terrible scenes of panic, was not to be tenable for many hours. Within half an hour of noon special editions of a halfpenny morning paper, and an evening paper belonging to the same proprietors, were issued simultaneously with a full, sensational, and quite unreserved statement of all the news obtainable from East Anglia. A number of motor-cyclists had been employed in the quest of

intelligence, and one item of the news they had to tell was that Colchester had offered resistance to the invaders, and as a result had been shelled and burned to the ground. A number of volunteers and other civilians had been found bearing arms, and had been tried by drum-head court martial and shot within the hour, by order of the Commander-in-Chief of the German forces.

Another sensational item was a copy of a proclamation issued by the German Commander-in-Chief. This proclamation was dated from Ipswich, and I think it struck more terror into the people than any other single item of intelligence published during that eventful day. It was headed with the Imperial German Arms, and announced the establishment of German military jurisdiction in England. It announced that the penalty of immediate death would be inflicted without any exception upon any British subject not wearing and being entitled to wear British military uniform who should be found:

1. Taking arms against the invaders.
2. Misleading German troops.
3. Injuring in any manner whatever any German subject.
4. Injuring any road, rail, or waterway, or means of communication.
5. Offering resistance of any kind whatsoever to the advance and occupation of the German Army.

Then followed peremptory details of instructions as to the supplies which every householder must furnish for the German soldiers quartered in his neighbourhood, and an announcement as to the supreme

and inviolable authority of the German officer in command of any given place.

Nothing else yet published brought home to the public the realization of what had happened as did this coldly pompous and, in the circumstances, very brutal proclamation. And no item in it so bit into the hearts of the bewildered Londoners who read it as did the clear incisive statement to the effect that a British subject who wore no military uniform would be shot like a dog if he raised a hand in the defence of his country or his home. He must receive the invader with open arms, and provide him food, lodging, and assistance of every kind, or be led out and shot. There were hundreds of thousands of men in London that day who would have given very much for the right to wear a uniform which they had learned almost to despise of late years; a uniform many of them had wished to abolish altogether, as the badge of a primitive and barbarous trade, a "hellish art."

We had talked glibly enough of war, of its impossibility in England, and of the childish savagery of the appeal to arms; just as, a few years earlier, before the naval reductions, we had talked of England's inviolability, secured her by her unquestioned mastery of the sea. We had written and spoken hundreds of thousands of fine words upon these subjects; and, within the last forty-eight hours, we had demonstrated with great energy the needlessness of armed forces for England. For and against, about it and about, we had woven a mazy network of windy platitudes and catch-phrases, all devised to hide the mani-

fest and manly duties of citizenship; all intended to justify the individual's exclusive concentration upon his own personal pleasures and aggrandizement, without waste of time or energy upon any claims of the commonwealth.

And now, in a few score of short, sharp words, in a single brief document, peremptorily addressed to the fifty million people of these islands, a German soldier had brought an end to all our vapourings, all our smug, self-interested theories, and shattered the monstrous fabric of our complaisance, as it were, with a rattle of his sword-hilt. Never before in history had a people's vanity been so shaken by a word.

In the early afternoon an unavoidable errand took me to a northeastern suburb. I made my return to town as one among an army of refugees. The people had begun flocking into London from as far north and east as Brentwood. The Great Eastern Railway was disorganized. The northern highways leading into London were occupied by unbroken lines of people journeying into the city for protection — afoot, in motor-cars, on cycles, and in every kind of horse-drawn vehicle, and carrying with them the strangest assortment of personal belongings.

At the earliest possible hour I made my way toward South Kensington. I told myself there might be something I could do for Constance Grey. Beyond that there was the fact that I craved another sight of her, and I longed to hear her comment when she knew I had finished with *The Mass*.

A porter on the Underground Railway told me that the Southwestern and Great Western termini were

blocked by feverish crowds of well-to-do people, struggling, with their children, for places in trains bound south and west. Huge motor-cars of the more luxurious type whizzed past one in the street continuously, their canopies piled high with bags, their bodies full of women and children, their chaffeurs driving hard toward the southern and western highways.

Outside South Kensington station I had my first sight of a Royal Proclamation upon the subject of the invasion. Evidently the Government realized that, prepared or unprepared, the state of affairs could no longer be hidden from the public. The King was at Buckingham Palace that day I knew, and it seemed to me that I read rather his Majesty's own sentiments than those of his Cabinet in the Proclamation. I gathered that the general public also formed this impression.

There is no need for me to reproduce a document which forms part of our history. The King's famous reference to the Government — "The Destroyers" — "Though admittedly unprepared for such a blow, my Government is taking prompt steps for coping in a decisive manner," etc.; and again, the equally famous reference to the German Emperor, in the sentence beginning: "This extraordinary attack by the armed forces of my Royal and Imperial nephew." These features of a nobly dignified and restrained Address seemed to me to be a really direct communication from their Sovereign to the English people. Whatever might be said of the position of "The Destroyers" in Whitehall, it became evident, even at this early stage, that the Throne was in no danger —

that the sanctity pertaining to the person of the Monarch who, as it were in despite of his Government, had done more for the true cause of peace than any other in Europe, remained inviolate in the hearts of the people.

For the rest, the Proclamation was a brief, simple statement of the facts, with an equally simple but very heart-stirring appeal to every subject of the Crown to concentrate his whole energies, under proper guidance, upon the task of repelling "this dastardly and entirely unprovoked attack upon our beloved country."

I heard many deeply significant and interesting comments from the circle of men and women who were reading this copy of the Proclamation. The remarks of two men I repeat here because in both cases they were typical and representative. The first remark was from a man dressed as a navvy, with a short clay pipe in his mouth. He said:

"Oh, yus; the King's all right; Gawd bless un! No one 'ld mind fightin' for 'im. It's 'is blighted Gov'nment wot's all bloomin' wrong — blast 'em!"

The reply came from a young man evidently of sedentary occupation — a shop-assistant or clerk:

"You're all right, too, old sport; but don't you forget the other feller's proclamation. If you 'aven't got no uniform, your number's up for lead pills, an' don't you forget it. A fair fight an' no favour's all right; but I'm not on in this blooming execution act, thank you. Edward R. I. will have to pass me, I can see."

"Well, 'e won't lose much matey, when all's said.

But you're English, anyway; that seems a pity. Why don't yer run 'ome ter yer ma, eh?"

"Go it, old sport. You're a blue-blooded Tory; an Imperialist, aren't you?"

"Not me, boy; I'm only an able-bodied man."

"What ho! Got a flag in your pocket, have you? You watch the Germans don't catch you fer sausage meat."

And then I passed on, heading for Constance Grey's flat. I reflected that I had done my share toward forming the opinions, the mental attitude of that young clerk or shop-assistant. The type was familiar enough. But I had had no part nor lot in the preservation of that navvy's simple patriotism. Rather, by a good deal, had the tendency of all I said and wrote been toward weakening the sturdy growth, and causing it to be deprecated as a thing archaic, an obstacle in the way of progress.

Progress! The expounding of Herr Mitmann of Stettin! That Monday was a minor day of judgment for others beside myself.

XVIII

THE DEAR LOAF

A third of the people, then, in the event of war, would immediately be reduced to starvation: and the rest of the thirty-eight million would speedily be forced thither. — L. Cope Cornford's *The Defenceless Islands* (London, 1906).

I SAW Constance Grey only for a few minutes during that day. She had passed the stage of shocked sorrow and sad fear in which I had found her on Sunday, and was exceedingly busy in organizing a corps of assistant nurses, women who had had some training, and were able to provide a practical outfit of nursing requisites. She had the countenance of the Army Medical authorities, but her nursing corps was to consist exclusively of volunteers.

The organizing ability this girl displayed was extraordinary. She spared five minutes for conversation, and warmed my heart with her appreciation of my severance of *The Mass* connection. And then, before I knew what had happened, she had me impressed, willingly enough, in her service, and I was off upon an errand connected with the volunteer nursing corps. News had arrived of some wounded refugees in Romford, unable to proceed on their way into London; and a couple of motor-cars, with nurses and medical comforts, were despatched at once.

Detailed news of the sacking of Colchester showed this to have been a most extraordinarily brutal affair for the work of a civilized army. The British regular troops at Colchester represented the whole of our forces of the northeastern division, and included three batteries of artillery. The regiments of this division had been reduced to three, and for eighteen months or more these had been mere skeletons of regiments, the bulk of the men being utilized to fill other gaps caused by the consistently followed policy of reduction which had characterized "The Destroyers'" régime.

A German spy who had been captured in Romford and brought to London, said that the Commander-in-Chief of the German forces in England had publicly announced to his men that the instructions received from their Imperial master were that the pride of the British people must be struck down to the dust; that the first blows must be crushing; that the British people were to be smitten with terror from which recovery should be impossible.

Be this as it may, the sacking of Colchester was a terrible business. A number of citizens had joined the shockingly small body of regulars in a gallant attempt at defence. The attempt was quite hopeless; the German superiority in numbers, discipline, metal, and material being quite overwhelming. But the German commander was greatly angered by the resistance offered, and, as soon as he ascertained that civilians had taken part in this, the town was first shelled and then stormed. It was surrounded by a cordon of cavalry, and — *no prisoners were taken.*

The town was burned to the ground, though many valuable stores were first removed from it; and those of the inhabitants who had not already fled were literally mown down in their native streets, without parley or quarter — men, women, and children being alike regarded as offenders against the edict forbidding any civilian British subject, upon pain of death, to offer any form of resistance to German troops. I myself spoke to a man in Knightsbridge that evening who had definite news that his nineteen-year-old daughter, a governess in the house of a Colchester doctor, was among those shot down in the streets of the town while endeavouring to make her escape with two children. The handful of British regulars had been shot or cut to pieces, and the barracks and stores taken over by the Germans.

As I left Constance Grey's flat that evening I passed a small baker's shop, before which an angry crowd was engaged in terrifying a small boy in a white apron, who was nervously endeavouring to put up the window shutters. I asked what the trouble was, and was told the baker had refused to sell his half-quartern loaves under sevenpence, or his quartern loaves under a shilling.

"It's agin the law, so it is," shouted an angry woman. "I'm a policeman's wife, an' I know what I'm talking about. I'll have the law of the nasty mean hound, so I will, with his shillin' for a fivepenny loaf, indeed!"

Long before this time, and while Britain still held on to a good proportion of her foreign trade, it had been estimated by statisticians that in the United

Kingdom some ten to twelve million persons lived always upon the verge of hunger. But since then the manufacturers of protected countries, notably Germany and the United States, had, as was inevitable in the face of our childish clinging to what we miscalled "free" trade, crowded the British manufacturer out of practically every market in the world, except those of Canada. Those also must of necessity have been lost, but for the forbearing and enduring loyalty of the Canadian people, who, in spite of persistent rebuffs, continued to extend and to increase their fiscal preference for imports from the Mother-country.

But, immense as Canada's growth was even then, no one country could keep the manufacturers of Britain busy; and I believe I am right in saying that at this time the number of those who lived always on the verge of hunger had increased to at least fifteen millions. Cases innumerable there were in which manufacturers themselves had gone to swell the ranks of the unemployed and insufficiently employed; the monstrous legion of those who lived always close to the terrifying spectre of hunger.

If the spirit of Richard Cobden walked the earth at that time, even as his obsessions assuredly still cumbered it, it must have found food for bitter reflection in the hundreds of empty factories, grass-grown courtyards, and broken-windowed warehouses, which a single day's walk would show one in the north of England.

You may be sure I thought of those things as I walked away from that baker's shop in South Ken-

sington. A journalist, even though he be only the assistant of a man like Blaine, is apt to see the conditions of life in his country fairly plainly, because he has a wider vision of them than most men. Into Fleet Street, each day brings an endless stream of "news items," not only from all parts of the world, but from every town and city in the kingdom. And your journalist, though he may have scant leisure for its digestion, absorbs the whole of this mass of intelligence each day in the process of conveying one-tenth part of it, in tabloid form, to the public.

If one assumes for the moment that only twelve million people in Great Britain were living on hunger's extreme edge at that time, the picture I had of the sullen, angry crowd outside the baker's shop remains a sufficiently sinister one. As a matter of fact, I believe that particular baker was a shade premature, or a penny or two excessive, in his advance of prices. But I know that by nightfall you could not have purchased a quartern loaf for elevenpence halfpenny within ten miles of Charing Cross. The Bakers' Society had issued its mandates broadcast. Shop-windows were stoned that night in south and east London; but twenty-four hours later the price of the quartern loaf was 1s. 3d., and a man offering 1s. 2d. would go empty away.

And with the same loaf selling at one-third the price, twelve million persons at least had lived always on the verge of hunger. I mention the staple food only, but precisely the same conditions applied to all other food-stuffs with the exception of dairy produce, the price of which was quadrupled by Tuesday after-

noon, and fish, the price of which put it at once beyond the reach of all save the rich, and all delicacies, the prices of which became prohibitive. Twelve million persons had lived on the verge of hunger, before, under normal conditions, and when the country's trade had been far larger and more prosperous than of late. Now, with the necessities of life standing at fully three times normal prices, a large number of trades employing many thousands of work-people were suddenly shut down upon, and rendered completely inoperative.

It must be borne in mind that we had been warned again and again that matters would be precisely thus and not otherwise in the event of war, and we had paid no heed whatever to the telling.

Historians have explained for us that the primary reason of the very sudden rise to famine rates of the prices of provisions was the persistent rumour that the effective bulk of the Channel Fleet had been captured or destroyed on its way northward from Spanish waters. German strategy had drawn the Fleet southward, in the first place, by means of an international " incident " in the Mediterranean, which was clearly the bait of what rumour called a death-trap. Once trapped, it was said, German seamanship and surprise tactics had done the rest.

The crews of the Channel Fleet ships (considerably below full strength) had been rushed out of shore barracks, in which discipline had fallen to a terribly low ebb, to their unfamiliar shipboard stations, at the time of the Mediterranean scare. Beset by the flower of the German Navy, in ships manned by crews who

lived afloat, it was asserted that the Channel Fleet had been annihilated, and that the entire force of the German Navy was concentrated upon the task of patrolling English waters.

We know that men and horses, stores and munitions of war, were pouring steadily and continuously into East Anglia from Germany during this time, escorted by German cruisers and torpedo-boats, and uninterrupted by British ships. There was yet no report of the Channel Fleet, the ships of which were already twenty-four hours overdue at Portsmouth.

Two things, more than any others, had influenced the British Navy during the Administration of "The Destroyers": the total cessation of building operations, and the withdrawal of ships and men from sea service. The reserve ships had long been unfit to put to sea, the reserve crews had, for all practical purposes, become landsmen — landsmen among whom want of sea-going discipline had of late produced many mutinous outbreaks.

It had been said by the most famous admiral of the time, and said without much exaggeration, that, within twelve months of "The Destroyers'" abandonment of the traditional two-Power standard of efficiency, the British Navy had "fallen to half-Power standard." The process was quickened, of course, by the unprecedented progress of the German Navy during the same period. It was said that at the end of 1907 the German Government had ships of war building in every great dockyard in the world. It is known that the entire fleet of the "Kaiser" class

torpedo-boats and destroyers was built and set afloat at the German Emperor's own private expense.

Then there were the "Well-borns," as they were called — vessels of no great weight of metal, it is true, but manned, armed, officered, and found better perhaps than any other war-ships in the world; entirely at the instigation of the German Navy League, and out of the pockets of the German nobility. The majority of our own wealthy classes preferred sinking their money in German motor-cars and German pleasure resorts; or one must assume so, for it is well known that our Navy League had long since ceased to exert any active influence, because it was unable to raise funds enough to pay its office expenses.

Our Navy might have had a useful reserve to draw upon in the various auxiliary naval bodies if these had not, one by one, been abolished. The Mercantile Marine was not in a position to lend much assistance in this respect, for our ships at that time carried eighty-seven thousand foreign officers and men, three parts of whom were Teutons. These facts were presumably all well known to the heads and governing bodies of the various trades, and, that being so, the extremely pessimistic attitude adopted by them, directly the fact of invasion was established, is scarcely to be wondered at.

In banking, insurance, underwriting, stock and share dealing, manufacturing, and in every branch of shipping the lead of the bakers were followed, and in many cases exceeded. The premiums asked in insurance and underwriting, and the unprecedented advance in the bank-rate, corresponding as it did

with a hopeless "slump" in every stock and share quoted on the Stock Exchange, from Consols to mining shares, brought business to a standstill in London on Monday afternoon.

On Tuesday entire blocks of offices remained unopened. In business, more perhaps than in any other walk of life, self-preservation and self-advancement were at that time, not alone the first, but the only fixed law. With bread at 1s. 4d. a loaf, great shipowners in England were cabling the masters of wheat ships in both hemispheres to remain where they were and await orders.

This last fact I learned from Leslie Wheeler, whom I happened to meet hurrying from the City to Waterloo, on his way down to Weybridge. His family were leaving for Devonshire next morning, to stay with relatives there.

"But, bless me!" I said, when he told me that friends of his father, shipping magnates, had despatched such cable messages that morning, "surely that's a ruffianly thing to do, when the English people are crying out for bread?"

Leslie shrugged his smartly-clad shoulders. "It's the English people's own affair," he said.

"How's that?"

"Why, you see it's all a matter of insurance. All commerce is based on insurance, in one form or another. The cost of shipping insurance to-day is absolutely prohibitive; in other words, there isn't any. We did have a permanent and non-fluctuating form of insurance of a kind one time. But you Socialist chaps — social reform, Little England for the Eng-

lish, and all that — you swept that away. Wouldn't pay for it; said it wasn't wanted. Now it's gone, and you're feeling the pinch. The worst of it is, you make the rest of us feel it, too. I'm thankful to say the dad's pulling out fairly well. He told me yesterday he hadn't five hundred pounds in anything British. Wise old bird, the dad!"

My friend's "You Socialist chaps" rather wrang my withers; its sting not being lessened at all by my knowledge of its justice. I asked after the welfare of the Wheeler family generally, but it was only as Leslie was closing the door of the cab he hailed that I mentioned Sylvia.

"Yes, Sylvia's all right," he said, as he waved me good-bye; "but she won't come away with the rest of us — absolutely refuses to budge."

And with that he was off, leaving me wondering about the girl who had at one time occupied so much of my mind, but of late had had so little of it. During the next few hours I wove quite a pretty story round Sylvia's refusal to accompany her family. I even thought of her as joining Constance Grey's nursing corps.

The thought of this development of Sylvia Wheeler's character interested me so much that I wrote to her that evening, tentatively sympathizing with her determination not to be frightened away from her own place. The whole thing was a curious misapprehension on my part; but Sylvia's reply (explaining that it was her particular place of worship she refused to leave, and that she was staying "with his

Reverence's sister"), though written within twenty-four hours, did not reach me until after many days — days such as England will never face again.

XIX

THE TRAGIC WEEK

England can never have an efficient army during peace, and she must, therefore, accept the rebuffs and calamities which are always in store for the nation that is content to follow the breed of cowards who usually direct her great affairs. The day will come when she will violently and suddenly lose her former fighting renown to such an unmistakable extent that the plucky fishwives will march upon Downing Street, and if they can catch its usual inmates, will rend them. One party is as bad as the other, and I hope and pray that when the national misfortune of a great defeat at sea overtakes us, followed by the invasion of England, that John Bull will turn and rend the jawers and talkers who prevent us from being prepared to meet invasion. — *From a letter written by Lord Wolsley, ex-Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, to Lord Wemyss, and published, and ignored by the public, in the year* 1906.

IT is no part of my intention to make any attempt to limp after the historians of the Invasion. The Official History, the half-dozen of standard military treatises, and the well-known works of Low, Forster, Gordon, and others, have allowed few details of the Invasion to escape unrecorded. But I confess it has always seemed to me that these writers gave less attention to the immediate aftermath of the Invasion than that curious period demanded. Yet here was surely a case in which effect was of vastly more inportance than cause, and aftermath than crisis. But perhaps I take that view because I am no historian.

To the non-expert mind, the most bewildering and extraordinary feature of that disastrous time was the amazing speed with which crisis succeeded crisis, and events, each of themselves epoch-making in character, crashed one upon another throughout the progress toward Black Saturday. We know now that much of this fury of haste which was so bewildering at the time, which certainly has no parallel in history, was due to the perfection of Germany's long-laid plans. Major-General Farquarson, in his "Military History of the Invasion," says:

"It may be doubted whether in all the history of warfare anything so scientifically perfect as the preparations for this attack can be found. It is safe to say that every inch of General von Füchter's progress was mapped out in Berlin long months before it came to astound and horrify England. The maps and plans in the possession of the German staff were masterpieces of cartographical science and art. The German Army knew almost to a bale of hay what provender lay between London and the coast, and where it was stored; and certainly their knowledge of East Anglia far exceeded that of our own authorities. The world has never seen a quicker blow struck; it has seldom seen a blow so crushingly severe; it has not often seen one so aggressively unjustifiable. And, be it noted, that down to the last halter and the least fragment of detail, the German Army was provided with every conceivable aid to success — *in duplicate.*

"Never in any enterprise known to history was less left to chance. The German War Office left nothing at all to chance, not even its conception — a

certainty really — of Britain's amazing unreadiness. And the German Army took no risks. A soldier's business, whether he be private or Field Marshal, is, after all, to obey orders. It would be both foolish and unjust to blame General von Füchter. But the fact remains that no victorious army ever risked less by generosity than the invading German Army. Its tactics were undoubtedly ruthless; they were the tactics necessitated by the orders of the Chief of the Army. They were more severe, more crushing, than any that have ever been adopted even by a punitive expedition under British colours. They were successful. For that they were intended. Swiftness and thoroughness were of the essence of the contract.

"With regard to their humanity or morality I am not here concerned. But it should always be remembered by critics that British apathy and neglect made British soil a standing temptation to the invader. The invasion was entirely unprovoked, so far as direct provocation goes. But who shall say it was entirely undeserved, or even unforeseen, by advisers whom the nation chose to ignore? This much is certain: Black Saturday and the tragic events leading up to it were made possible, not so much by the skill and forethought of the enemy, which were notable, as by a state of affairs in England which made that day one of shame and humiliation, as well as a day of national mourning. No just recorder may hope to escape that fact."

In London, the gravest aspect of that tragic week was the condition of the populace. It is supposed that over two million people flocked into the capital

during the first three days. And the prices of the necessities of life were higher in London than anywhere else in the country. The Government measures for relief were ill-considered and hopelessly inadequate. But, in justice to "The Destroyers," it must be remembered that leading authorities have said that adequate measures were impossible, from sheer lack of material.

During one day — I think it was Wednesday — huge armies of the hungry unemployed — nine-tenths of our wage-earners were unemployed — were set to work upon entrenchments in the north of London. But there was no sort of organization, and most of the men streamed back into the town that night, unpaid, unfed, and sullenly resentful.

Then, like cannon shots, came the reports of the fall of York, Bradford, Leeds, Halifax, Hull, and Huddersfield, and the apparently wanton demolition of Norwich Cathedral. The sinking of the *Dreadnought* near the Nore was known in London within the hour. Among the half-equipped regulars who were hurried up from the southwest, I saw dozens of men intercepted in the streets by the hungry crowds, and hustled into leaving their fellows.

Then came Friday's awful "surrender riot" at Westminster, a magnificent account of which gives Martin's big work its distinctive value. I had left Constance Grey's flat only half an hour before the riot began, and when I reached Trafalgar Square there was no space between that and the Abbey in which a stone could have been dropped without falling upon a man or a woman. There were women in

that maddened throng, and some of them, crying hoarsely in one breath for surrender and for bread, were suckling babies.

No Englishman who witnessed it could ever forget that sight. The Prime Minister's announcement that the surrender should be made came too late. The panic and hunger-maddened incendiaries had been at work. Smoke was rising already from Downing Street and the back of the Treasury. Then came the carnage. One can well believe that not a single unnecessary bullet was fired. Not to believe that would be to saddle those in authority with a less than human baseness. But the question history puts is: Who was primarily to blame for the circumstances which led up to the tragic necessity of the firing order?

Posterity has unanimously laid the blame upon the Administration of that day, and assuredly the task of whitewashing "The Destroyers" would be no light or pleasant one. But, again, we must remind ourselves that the essence of the British Constitution has granted to us always, for a century past at least, as good a Government as we have deserved. "The Destroyers" may have brought shame and humiliation upon England. Unquestionably, measures and acts of theirs produced those effects. But who and what produced "The Destroyers" as a Government? The only possible answer to that is, in the first place, the British public; in the second place, the British people's selfish apathy and neglect, where national duty and responsibility were concerned, and blindly selfish absorption, in the matter of its own individual interests and pleasures.

One hundred and thirty-two men, women, and children killed, and three hundred and twenty-eight wounded; the Treasury buildings and the official residence of the Prime Minister gutted; that was the casualty list of the "Surrender Riot" at Westminster. But the figures do not convey a tithe of the horror, the unforgettable shame and horror, of the people's attack upon the Empire's sanctuary. The essence of the tragedy lay in their demand for immediate and unconditional surrender; the misery of it lay in "The Destroyers'" weak, delayed, terrified response, followed almost immediately by the order to those in charge of the firing parties — an order flung hysterically at last, the very articulation of panic.

No one is likely to question Martin's assertion that Friday's tragedy at Westminster must be regarded — "not alone as the immediate cause of Black Saturday's national humiliation, but also as the crucial phase, the pivot upon which the development of the whole disastrous week turned." But the Westminster Riot at least had the saving feature of unpremeditation. It was, upon the one side, the outcry of a wholly undisciplined, hungry, and panic-smitten public; and, upon the other side, the irresponsible, more than half-hysterical action of a group of terrified and incompetent politicians. These men had been swept into great positions, which they were totally unfitted to fill, by a tidal wave of reactionary public feeling, and of the blind selfishness of a decadence born of long freedom from any form of national discipline; of liberties too easily won and but half-understood;

of superficial education as to rights, and absymal ignorance as to duties.

But, while fully admitting the soundness of Martin's verdict, for my part I feel that my experiences during that week left me with memories not perhaps more shocking, but certainly more humiliating and disgraceful to England, than the picture burnt into my mind by the Westminster Riot. I will mention two of these.

By Wednesday a large proportion of the rich residents of Western London had left the capital to take its chances, while they sought the security of country homes, more particularly in the southwestern counties. Such thoroughfares as Piccadilly, Regent Street, and Bond Street were no longer occupied by well-dressed people with plenty of money to spend. Their usual patrons were for the most part absent; but, particularly at night, they were none the less very freely used — more crowded, indeed, than ever before. The really poor, the desperately hungry people, had no concern whatever with the wrecking of the famous German restaurants and beer-halls. They were not among the Regent Street and Piccadilly promenaders.

The Londoners who filled these streets at night — the people who sacked the Leicester Square hotel and took part in the famous orgie which Blackburn describes as "unequalled in England since the days of the Plague, or in Europe since the French Revolution"; these people were not at all in quest of food. They were engaged upon a mad pursuit of pleasure and debauchery and drink. "Eat, drink, and be

vicious; but above all, drink and be vicious; for this is the end of England!" That was their watchword.

I have no wish to repeat Blackburn's terrible stories of rapine and bestiality, of the frenzy of intoxication, and the blind savagery of these Saturnalias. In their dreadful nakedness they stand for ever in the pages of his great book, a sinister blur, a fiery warning, writ large across the scroll of English history. I only wish to say that scenes I actually saw with my own eyes (one episode in trying to check the horror of which I lost two fingers and much blood), prove beyond all question to me that, even in its most lurid and revolting passages, Blackburn's account is a mere record of fact, and not at all, as some apologists have sought to show, an exaggerated or overheated version of these lamentable events.

Regarded as an indication of the pass we had reached at this period of our decadence, this stage of our trial by fire, the conduct of the crowds in Western London during those dreadful nights, impressed me more forcibly than the disaster which Martin considers the climax and pivot of the week's tragedy.

One does not cheerfully refer to these things, but, to be truthful, I must mention the other matter which produced upon me, personally, the greatest sense of horror and disgrace.

Military writers have described for us most fully the circumstances in which General Lord Wensley's command was cut and blown to pieces in the Epping and Romford districts. Authorities are agreed that the records of civilized warfare have nothing more

horrible to tell than the history of that ghastly butchery. As a slaughter, there was nothing exactly like it in the Russo-Japanese war — for we know that there were less than a hundred survivors of the whole of Lord Wensley's command. But those who mourned the loss of these brave men had a consolation of which nothing could rob them; the consolation which is graven in stone upon the Epping monument; a consolation preserved as well in German as in English history. Germany may truthfully say of the Epping shambles that no quarter was given that day. England may say, with what pride she may, that none was asked. The last British soldier slaughtered in the Epping trenches had no white flag in his hand, but a broken bayonet, and, under his knee, the Colours of his regiment.

The British soldiers in those blood-soaked trenches were badly armed, less than half-trained, under-officered, and of a low physical standard. But these lamentable facts had little or nothing to do with their slaughter. There were but seven thousand of them, while the German force has been variously estimated at between seventy thousand and one hundred thousand horse and foot, besides artillery. One need not stop to question who should bear the blame for the half-trained, vilely equipped condition of these heroic victims. The far greater question, to which the only answer can be a sad silence of remorse and bitter humiliation, bears upon the awful needlessness of their sacrifice.

The circumstances have been described in fullest detail from authentic records. The stark fact which

stands out before the average non-expert observer is that Lord Wensley was definitely promised reinforcements to the number of twenty thousand horse and foot; that after the Westminster Riot not a single man or horse reached him; *and he was never informed of the Government's forced decision to surrender.*

And thus those half-trained boys and men laid down their lives for England within a dozen miles of Westminster, almost twelve hours after a weak-kneed, panic-stricken Cabinet had passed its word to the people that England would surrender.

That, to my thinking, was the most burning feature of our disgrace; that, as an indication of our parlous estate, is more terrible than Martin's "pivot" of the tragic week.

XX

BLACK SATURDAY

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men.

WORDSWORTH.

IN the afternoon of Black Saturday, General von Füchter, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army in England, took up his quarters, with his staff, in the residence of the German Ambassador to the Court of St. James in Carlton House Terrace, and, so men said, enjoyed the first sleep he had had for a week. (The German Ambassador had handed in his credentials, and been escorted out of England on the previous Monday.)

Throughout the small hours of Saturday morning I was at work near Romford as one of the volunteer bearers attached to Constance Grey's nursing corps. That is one reason why the memory of the north of London massacre will never leave me. One may assume that the German Army had no wish to kill nurses, but, as evidence of the terrible character of the onslaught on the poor defences of London, I may recall the fact that three of our portable nursing

shelters were blown to pieces; while of Constance Grey's nurses alone five were killed and fourteen were badly wounded.

Myself, I had much to be thankful for, my only wound being the ploughing of a little furrow over the biceps of my right arm by a bullet that passed out through the back of my coat. But a circumstance for which my gratitude was more deeply moved was the fact that Constance Grey, despite a number of wonderfully narrow escapes, was entirely uninjured.

The actual entry of General von Füchter and his troops into London has been so often described that nothing remains for me to say about that. Also, I am unable to speak as an eye witness, since Constance Grey and myself were among those who returned to London, in the rear of the German troops, with the ambulances. The enemy's line of communications stretched now from the Wash to London, and between Brentwood and London there were more Germans than English. I believe the actual number of troops which entered London behind General von Füchter was under forty-eight thousand; but to the northward, northeast, and northwest the huge force which really invested the capital was spread in careful formation, and amply provided with heavy artillery, then trained upon central London from all such points as the Hampstead heights.

Although a formal note of surrender had been conveyed to General von Füchter at Romford, *after* the annihilation of our entrenched troops, occasional shots were fired upon the enemy as they entered London.

Indeed, in the Whitechapel Road, one of the General's aides-de-camp, riding within a few yards of his chief, was killed by a shot from the upper windows of a provision shop. But the German reprisals were sharp. It is said that fifty-seven lives paid the penalty for the shooting of that aide-de-camp. Several streets of houses in northeast London were burned.

By this time the Lord Mayor of London had been notified that serious results would accrue if any further opposition were offered to the German acceptance of London's surrender; and proclamations to that effect were posted everywhere. But the great bulk of London's inhabitants were completely cowed by hunger and terror. Practically, it may be said that, throughout, the only resistance offered to the Army of the invaders was that which ended so tragically in the trenches beyond Epping and Romford, with the equally tragical defence of Colchester, and some of the northern towns captured by the eighth German Army Corps.

In London the people's demand from the first had been for unconditional surrender. It was this demand which had culminated in the Westminster Riot. The populace was so entirely undisciplined, so completely lacking in the sort of training which makes for self-restraint, that even if the Government had been possessed of an efficient striking force for defensive purposes, the public would not have permitted its proper utilization. The roar of German artillery during Friday night and Saturday morning, with the news of the awful massacre in the northern entrench-

ments, had combined to extinguish the last vestige of desire for resistance which remained in London.

Almost all the people with money had left the capital. Those remaining — the poor, the refugees from northward, irresponsibles, people without a stake of any kind; these desired but the one thing: food and safety. The German Commander-in-Chief was wise. He knew that if time had been allowed, resistance would have been organized, even though the British regular Army had, by continuous reductions in the name of "economy," practically ceased to exist as a striking force. And therefore time was the one thing he had been most determined to deny England.

It is said that fatigue killed more German soldiers than fell to British bullets; and the fact may well be believed when we consider the herculean task General von Füchter had accomplished in one week. His plan of campaign was to strike his hardest, and to keep on striking his hardest, without pause, till he had the British Government on its knees before him; till he had the British public — maddened by sudden fear, and the panic which blows of this sort must bring to a people with no defensive organization, and no disciplinary training — cowed and crying for quarter.

The German Commander has been called inhuman, a monster, a creature without bowels. All that is really of small importance. He was a soldier who carried out orders. His orders were ruthless orders. The instrument he used was a very perfect one. He carried out his orders with the utmost precision and thoroughness; and his method was the surest, quick-

est, and, perhaps, the only way of taking possession of England.

At noon precisely, the Lord Mayor of London was brought before the German Commander-in-Chief in the audience chamber of the Mansion House, and formally placed under arrest. A triple cordon of sentries and two machine-gun parties were placed in charge of the Bank of England, and quarters were allotted for two German regiments in the immediate vicinity. Two machine-guns were brought into position in front of the Stock Exchange, and all avenues leading from the heart of the City were occupied by mixed details of cavalry and infantry, each party having one machine-gun.

My acquaintance, Wardle, of the *Sunday News*, was in the audience chamber of the Mansion House at this time, and he says that he never saw a man look more exhausted than General von Füchter, who, according to report, had not had an hour's sleep during the week. But though the General's cheeks were sunken, his chin unshaven, and his eyes blood-red, his demeanour was that of an iron man — stern, brusque, taciturn, erect, and singularly immobile.

Food was served to this man of blood and iron in the Mansion House, while the Lord Mayor's secretary proceeded to Whitehall, with word to the effect that the Commander-in-Chief of the German forces in England awaited the sword and formal surrender of the British Commander, before proceeding to take up quarters in which he would deal with peace negotiations.

Forster's great work, "The Surrender," gives the

finest description we have of the scene that followed. The Field Marshal in command of the British forces had that morning been sent for by a Cabinet Council then being held in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons. With nine members of his staff, the white-haired Field Marshal rode slowly into the City, in full uniform. His instructions were for unconditional surrender, and a request for the immediate consideration of the details of peace negotiations.

The Field Marshal had once been the most popular idol of the British people, whom he had served nobly in a hundred fights. Of late years he himself had been as completely disregarded, as the grave warnings, the earnest appeals, which he had bravely continued to urge upon a neglectful people. The very Government which now despatched him upon the hardest task of his whole career, the tendering of his sword to his country's enemy, had for long treated him with cold disfavour. The general public, in its anti-national madness, had sneered at this great little man, their one-time hero, as a Jingo crank.

(As an instance of the lengths to which the public madness went in this matter, the curious will find in the British Museum copies of at least one farcical work of fiction written and published with considerable success, as burlesques of that very invasion which had now occurred, of the possibility of which this loyal servant in particular had so earnestly and so unavailingly warned his countrymen.)

Now, the blow he had so often foreshadowed had fallen; the capital of the British Empire was actually

in possession of an enemy; and the British leader knew himself for a Commander without an Army.

He had long since given his only son to the cause of Britain's defence. The whole of his own strenuous life had been devoted to the same cause. His declining years had known no ease by reason of his unceasing and thankless striving to awaken his fellow countrymen to a sense of their military responsibilities. Now he felt that the end of all things had come for him, in the carrying out of an order which snapped his life's work in two, and flung it down at the feet of England's almost unopposed conqueror.

The understanding Englishman has forgiven General von Füchter much, by virtue of his treatment of the noble old soldier, who with tear-blinded eyes and twitching lips tendered him the surrender of the almost non-existent British Army. No man ever heard a speech from General von Füchter, but the remark with which he returned our Field Marshal's sword to him will never be forgotten in England. He said, in rather laboured English, with a stiff, low bow:

"Keep it, my lord. If your countrymen had not forgotten how to recognize a great soldier, I could never have demanded it of you."

And the man of iron saluted the heart-broken Chief of the shattered British Army.

We prefer not to believe the report that this, the German Commander's one act of gentleness and magnanimity in England, was subsequently paid for by the loss of a certain Imperial decoration. But, if the story was true, then the decoration it concerned was well lost.

It was a grim, war-stained procession that followed General von Füchter when, between two and three o'clock, he rode with his staff by way of Ludgate Hill and the Strand to Carlton House Terrace. But the cavalry rode with drawn sabres, the infantry marched with fixed bayonets, and, though weariness showed in every line of the men's faces, there was as yet no sign of relaxed tension.

Throughout that evening and night the baggage wagons rumbled through London, without cessation, to the two main western encampments in Hyde Park. The whole of Pall Mall and Park Lane were occupied by German officers that night, few of the usual occupants of the clubs in the one thoroughfare, or the residences in the other, being then in London.

By four o'clock General von Füchter's terms were in the hands of the Government which had now completed its earning of the title of "The Destroyers." The Chief Commissioner of Police and the principal municipal authorities of greater London had all been examined during the day at the House of Commons, and were unanimous in their verdict that any delay in the arrangement of peace and the resumption of trade, ashore and afloat, could mean only revolution. Whole streets of shops had been sacked and looted already by hungry mobs, who gave no thought to the invasion or to any other matter than the question of food supply. A great, lowering crowd of hungry men and women occupied Westminster Bridge and the southern embankment (no German soldiers had been seen south of the Thames) waiting for the news of the promised conclusion of peace terms.

There is not wanting evidence that certain members of the Government had already bitterly repented of their suicidal retrenchment and anti-defensive attitude in the past. But repentance had come too late. The Government stood between a hungry, terrified populace demanding peace and food, and a mighty and victorious army whose commander, acting upon the orders of his Government, offered peace at a terrible price, or the absolute destruction of London. For General von Füchter's brief memorandum of terms alluded threateningly to the fact that his heavy artillery was so placed that he could blow the House of Commons into the river in an hour.

At six o'clock the German terms were accepted, a provisional declaration of peace was signed, and public proclamations to that effect, embodying reference to the deadly perils which would be incurred by those taking part in any kind of street disorder, were issued to the public. As to the nature of the German terms, it must be admitted that they were as pitiless as the German tactics throughout the invasion, and as surely designed to accomplish their end and object. Berlin had not forgotten the wonderful recuperative powers which enabled France to rise so swiftly from out of the ashes of 1870. Britain was to be far more effectually crippled.

The money indemnity demanded by General von Füchter was the largest ever known: one thousand million pounds sterling. But it must be remembered that the enemy already held the Bank of England. One hundred millions, or securities representing that amount, were to be handed over within twenty-four

hours. The remaining nine hundred millions were to be paid in nine annual instalments of one hundred millions each, the first of which must be paid within three months. Until the last payment was made, German troops were to occupy Glasgow, Cardiff, Portsmouth, Devonport, Chatham, Yarmouth, Harwich, Hull, and Newcastle. The Transvaal was to be ceded to the Boers under a German Protectorate. Britain was to withdraw all pretensions regarding Egypt and Morocco, and to cede to Germany, Gibraltar, Malta, Ceylon, and British West Africa.

It is not necessary for me to quote the few further details of the most exacting demands a victor ever made upon a defeated enemy. There can be no doubt that, in the disastrous circumstances they had been so largely instrumental in bringing about, "The Destroyers" had no choice, no alternative from their acceptance of these crushing terms.

And thus it was that — not at the end of a long and hard-fought war, as the result of vast misfortunes or overwhelming valour on the enemy's side, but simply as the result of the condition of utter and lamentable defencelessness into which a truckling Government and an undisciplined, blindly selfish people had allowed England to lapse — the greatest, wealthiest Power in civilization was brought to its knees in the incredibly short space of one week, by the sudden but scientifically devised onslaught of a single ambitious nation, ruled by a monarch whose lack of scruples was more than balanced by his strength of purpose.

XXI

ENGLAND ASLEEP

Evil springs up, and flowers, and bears no seed,
And feeds the green earth with its swift decay,
Leaving it richer for the growth of truth. — LOWELL.

GENERAL VON FÜCHTER and his splendidly trained troops were not the only people in England for whom the mere fatigue of that week was something not easily to be forgotten. My impression of its last three days is that they brought no period of rest for any one. I know that there were as many people in the streets by night as by day. The act of going within doors or sitting down, seemed in some way to be a kind of cowardice, a species of shirking, or disloyalty.

I remember Constance Grey assuring me that she had lain down for an hour on Thursday. I can say with certainty that we were both of us on our feet from that time until after the terms of the surrender were made known on Saturday evening. I can also say that no thought of this matter of physical weariness occurred to me until that period of Saturday evening — soon after seven o'clock it was — when the proclamations were posted up in Whitehall, and the special issues of the newspapers containing the peace announcements began to be hawked.

An issue of the *Standard*, a single sheet, with broad black borders, was the first press announcement to reach the public; and it contained a grave, closely reasoned address from the most famous statesman of the Opposition, urging upon the public the need vital of exercising the utmost cautiousness and self-restraint.

"England has been stricken to the earth," said this dignified statement. "Her condition is critical. If the injury sustained is not to prove mortal, the utmost circumspection is required at this moment. The immediate duty of every loyal subject is quietly to concentrate his energies for the time upon the restoration of normal conditions. In that way only can our suffering country be given that breathing space which is the first step toward recuperation. For my part, I can conceive of no better, quicker method for the individual of serving this end than for him to make the speediest possible return to the pursuit of his ordinary avocation in life. It is to be hoped that, bearing in mind our urgent need, all employers of labour will do their utmost to provide immediate occupation for their work-people. It is not in the tragic catastrophe of the past week, but in the ordeal of this moment, of the coming days, that the real test of England's endurance lies. Never before was her need so great; never before has Nelson's demand had so real and intimate a message for each and every one of us. I pray God the response may ring true. 'England expects that every man will do his duty!'"

I must not omit my tribute to those responsible for

the salient fact that this important issue of the journal whose unwavering Imperialism had been scoffed at in the mad times before the Invasion, was not sold, but distributed. Employment was found for hundreds of hungry men, women, and children in its free distribution; their wage being the thing they most desired: bread, with soup, which, as I learned that night, was prepared in huge coppers in the foundry of the printing works.

I was with Constance Grey in Trafalgar Square when the news of the accepted terms of peace reached us. We had just secured admission into Charing Cross Hospital — not without considerable difficulty, for its wards were crowded — for two wounded nurses from Epping. Together we read the news, and when the end was reached it seemed to me that the light of life and energy passed suddenly out of my companion. She seemed to suffer some bodily change and loss, to be bereft of her spring and erectness.

"Ah, well," she said, "I am very tired, Dick; and, do you know, it occurs to me I have had nothing to eat since yesterday afternoon. I wonder can we get away from these men, anywhere?"

The streets between Victoria and Hyde Park were lined by German cavalry men, who sat motionless on their chargers, erect and soldierly, but, in many cases, fast asleep.

We began to walk eastward, looking for some place in which we could rest and eat. But every place seemed to be closed.

"How long have you been on your feet?" said Constance, as we passed the Law Courts.

"Only since Thursday evening," I said. "I had a long rest in that cart, you remember — the one I brought the lint and bandages in."

Just then we passed a tailor's shop-window, and, in a long, narrow strip of mirror I caught a full-length reflection of myself. I positively turned swiftly to see who could have cast that reflection. Four days without shaving and without a change of collar; two days without even washing my hands or face; four days without undressing, and eight hours' work beside the North London entrenchments — these experiences had made a wild-looking savage of me, and, until that moment, I had never thought of my appearance.

Smoke, earth, and blood had worked their will upon me. My left hand, from which two fingers were missing, was swathed in blackened bandages. My right coat-sleeve had been cut off by a good-natured fellow who had bandaged the flesh wound in my arm to stop its bleeding. My eyes glinted dully in a black face, with curious white fringes round them, where their moisture had penetrated my skin of smoked dirt. And here was I walking beside Constance Grey!

Then I realized, for the first time, that Constance herself bore many traces of these last few terrible days. In some mysterious fashion her face and collar seemed to have escaped scot free; but her dress was torn, ragged, and stained; and the intense weariness of her expression was something I found it hard to bear.

Just then we met Wardle of the *Sunday News*, and he told us of the bread and soup distribution in the *Standard* office. Something warned me that Constance had reached the limit of her endurance, and, in another moment, she had reeled against me and almost fallen. I took her in my arms, and Wardle walked beside me, up a flight of stairs and into the office of the great newspaper. There I walked into the first room I saw — the sanctum of some managerial bashaw, for aught I knew — and placed Constance comfortably in a huge easy chair of green leather.

Wardle brought some water, for Constance was in a fainting state still; but I hurried him off again to look for bread and soup. Meantime I lowered Constance to the floor, having just remembered that in such a case the head should be kept low. Her face was positively deathly — lips, cheeks, all alike gray-white, save for the purple hollows under both eyes. One moment I was taking stock of these things, as a doctor might; the next I was on my knees and kissing the nerveless hand at her side, all worn and bruised and stained as it was from her ceaseless strivings of the past week. I knew then that, for me, though I should live a hundred years and Constance should never deign to speak to me again, there was but one woman in the world.

I am afraid Wardle found me at the same employ; but, though I remember vaguely resenting his fresh linen and normally smart appearance, he was a good fellow, and knew when to seem blind. All he said was:

"Here's the soup!"

"I was on My Knees and Kissing the Nerveless Hand"

He had brought a small washhand basin full to the brim, and a loaf of warm, new bread. As the steam of the hot soup reached me, I realized that I was a very hungry animal, whatever else I might be besides. It may have been the steam of the soup that rallied Constance. I know that within two minutes I was feeding her with it from a cracked teacup. It is a wonderful thing to watch the effect of a few mouthfuls of hot soup upon an exhausted woman, whose exhaustion is due as much to lack of food as need of rest. There was no spoon, but the teacup, though cracked, was clean, and I found a tumbler in a luxurious little cabinet near the chair one felt was dedicated to the Fleet Street magnate whose room we had invaded. A tumbler is almost as convenient to drink soup from as a cup, but requires more careful manipulation when hot. If the side of the tumbler becomes soupy, it can easily be wiped with the crumb of new bread.

Wardle seemed to be as sufficiently nourished as he was neatly dressed; but he found a certain vicarious pleasure, I think, in watching Constance and myself at the bowl. We sat on the Turkey carpet, and used the seat of the green chair as a table — a strange meal, in strange surroundings; but a better I never had, before or since. There was a physical gratification, a warmth and a comfort to me, in watching the colour flowing gradually back into Constance's face; a singularly beautiful process of nature I thought it. Presently the door of the room opened with a jerk, and a tallish man wearing a silk hat looked in.

"H'm!" he said brusquely. "Beg pardon!"

And he was gone. I learned afterwards that the room belonged to him, and that he came direct from a conference of newspaper pundits called together at Westminster by the Home Secretary. I do not know where he took refuge, but as for us we went on with our soup and bread till repletion overtook us, as it quickly does after long fasts, and renewed strength brought sighs of contentment.

"Wardle," I remember saying to my journalistic friend, with absurd earnestness, "have you anything to smoke?"

"I haven't a thing but my pipe," he said. "But wait a moment! There used to be — yes. Look here!"

There was a drawer in a side-table near the great writing-table, and one division of it was half-full of cigarettes, the other of Upman's "Torpedoes."

"I will repay thee," I murmured irreverently, as I helped myself to one of each, and lit the cigarette, having obtained permission from Constance. It was the first tobacco I had tasted for forty-eight hours, and I was a very regular smoker. I had not known my need till then, a fact which will tell much to smokers.

"And now?" said Constance. Her eyelids were drooping heavily.

"Now I am going to take you straight out to South Kensington, and you are going to rest."

I had never used quite that tone to Constance before. I think, till now, hers had been the guiding and directing part. Yet her influence had never been stronger upon me than at that moment.

"Well, of course, there are no cabs or omnibuses," said Wardle, "but a man told me the Underground was running trains at six o'clock."

We had a long, long wait at Blackfriars' station, but a train came eventually, and we reached the flat in South Kensington as a neighbouring church clock struck ten. The journey was curious and impressive from first to last. Fleet Street had been very much alive still when we left it; and we saw long files of baggage wagons rumbling along between Prussian lancers. But Blackfriars was deserted, the ticket collector slept soundly on his box; the streets in South Kensington were silent as the grave.

London slept that night for the first time in a week. I learned afterwards how the long lines of German sentries in Pall Mall, Park Lane, and elsewhere slept solidly at their posts; how the Metropolitan police slept on their beats; how thousands of men, women, and children slept in the streets of South London, whither they had fled panic-stricken that morning. Conquerors and conquered together, the whole vast city slept that night as never perhaps before or since. After a week of terror, of effort, of despair, and of debauchery, the sorely stricken capital of the British Empire lay that night like a city of the dead. England and her invaders were worn out.

At the flat we found Mrs. Van Homrey placidly knitting.

"Well, young folk," she said cheerily; "I've had all the news, and there's nothing to be said; and — there's bath and bed waiting for you, Conny. I shall bring you something hot in your room."

Ah, the kindly comfort of that motherly soul's words! It was but a few hours since her "Conny" had stood by my side on ground that was literally blood-soaked. Since the previous night we had both seen Death in his most terrible guise; Death swinging his dripping scythe through scores of lives at a stroke. We had been in England's riven heart throughout the day of England's bitterest humiliation; and Mrs. Van Homrey had bed and bath waiting, with "something hot" for Constance to take in her room.

"But, Aunty, if you could have seen ——"

"Dear child, I know it all." She patted her niece's shoulder, and I noticed the rings and the shiny softness of her fingers. She saw at a glance — indeed, had seen beforehand, in anticipation — the wrought-up, exhausted condition Constance had reached. "I know it all, dear," she said soothingly. "But the time has come for rest now. Nothing else is any good till that is done with. Come, child. God will send better days for England. First, we must rest."

So Constance turned to leave the room.

"And you?" she said to me.

"I will see to him. You run along, my dear," said her aunt. So Constance took my hand.

"Good night, Dick. You have been very good and kind, and — patient. Good night!"

There was no spare bedroom in that little flat, but the dear old lady had actually made up a bed for me on a couch in the drawing-room, and before she retired for the night she made me free of the bathroom,

and supplied me with towels and such like matters, and gave me cake and cocoa; a delicious repast I thought it. And so, while crushed and beaten London lay sleeping off its exhaustion, I slept under Constance Grey's roof, full of gratitude, and of a kind of new hope and gladness, very foreign, one would have said, to my gruesome experiences of the past forty-eight hours.

England, the old victorious island kingdom, bequeathed to us by Raleigh, Drake, Nelson; the nineteenth-century England of triumphant commercialism; England till then inviolate for a thousand years; rich and powerful beyond all other lands; broken now under the invader's heel — that ancient England slept.

PART II

THE AWAKENING

Exoriare aliquis de nostris ex ossibus ultor. — VIRGIL.

I

THE FIRST DAYS

The river glideth at his own sweet will.
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

. . . . . .

Without Thee, what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear Mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

WORDSWORTH.

IT is safe to say that England's exhausted sleep on the night of Black Saturday marked the end of an era in British history. It was followed by a curious, quiescent half-consciousness during Sunday. For the greater part of that day I should suppose that more than half London's populace continued its sleep.

One of the first things I realized after Monday morning's awakening in my Bloomsbury lodging was that I must find wages and work speedily, since I possessed no more than a very few pounds. As a fact, upon that and several subsequent days I found plenty of work, if nothing noticeable in the way of wages. I was second in command of one of the food and labour bureaux which Constance Grey helped to organize, and all the workers in these bureaux were volunteers.

Another of my first impressions after the crisis was a sense of my actual remoteness, in normal circumstances, from Constance. Her father had left Constance a quite sufficient income. Mrs. Van Homrey was in her own right comfortably well-to-do. But, despite the exiguous nature of my own resources, it was not the money question which impressed me most in this connection, but rather the fact that, while my only acquaintances in London were of a more or less discreditable sort, Constance seemed to have friends everywhere, and these in almost every case people of standing and importance. Her army friends were apt to be generals, her political friends ex-Ministers, her journalistic friends editors, and so forth. And I —— But you have seen my record up to this point.

Nobody could possibly want Constance so much as I did, I thought. But an astonishing number of persons of infinitely more consequence than myself seemed to delight to honour her, to obtain her co-operation. And I loved her. There was no possibility of my mistaking the fact. I had been used to debate with myself regarding Sylvia Wheeler. There was no room for debate where my feeling for Constance was concerned. The hour of her breakdown in Fleet Street on Black Saturday had taught me so much.

In the face of my circumstances just then, the idea of making any definite disclosure of my feelings to Constance seemed impracticable. Yet there was one intimate passage between us during that week, the nature of which I cannot precisely define. I know I conveyed some hint to Constance of my feeling toward

her, and I was made vaguely conscious that anything like a declaration of love would have seemed shocking to her at that time. She held that, at such a juncture, no merely personal interests ought to be allowed to weigh greatly with any one. The country's call upon its subjects was all-absorbing in the eyes of this "one little bit of a girl from South Africa," as Crondall had called her. It made me feel ashamed to realize how far short I fell (even after the shared experiences culminating in Black Saturday) of her personal standard of patriotism. Even now, my standing in her eyes, my immediate personal needs, loomed nearer, larger in my mind than England's fate. I admitted as much with some shamefacedness, and Constance said:

"Ah, well, Dick, I suspect that is a natural part of life lived entirely in England, the England of the past. There was so little to arouse the other part in one. All the surrounding influences were against it. My life has been different. Once one has lived, in one's own home, through a native rising, for instance, purely personal interests never again seem quite so absorbing. The elemental things had been so long shut out of English life. Why, do you know —— ?" And she began to tell me of one of the schemes in which she was interested; in connection with which I learned of a cable message she had received that day telling that John Crondall was then on his way to England.

The least forgiving critics of "The Destroyers" have admitted that they did their best and worked well during those strange weeks which came immedi-

ately after the invasion. One reason of this was that party feeling in politics had been scotched. The House of Commons met as one party. There was no longer any real Opposition, unless one counted a small section of rabid anti-Britishers, who were incapable of learning a lesson; and even they carped but feebly, while the rest of the House devoted its united energies to the conduct of the country's shattered business with the single aim of restoring normal conditions. Throughout the country two things were tacitly admitted. That the Government in power must presently answer for its doings to the public before ceasing to be a Government; and that the present was no time for such business as that of a general election.

And so we had the spectacle of a Government which had entirely lost the confidence of the electors, a Government anathematized from the Orkneys to Land's End, carrying on its work with a unison and a complete freedom from opposition such as had not been known before, even by the biggest majority or the most popular Administration which had ever sat at Westminster. For the first time, and by no effort of our own, we obtained the rule of an Imperial Parliament devoted to no other end than the nation's welfare. The House of Commons witnessed many novel spectacles at that time — such as consultations between the leading members of the Government and the Opposition. Most of its members learned many valuable lessons in those first weeks of the new régime. It is to be supposed that the Surrender Riot had taught them something.

It must also be admitted that General, or, as he

now was, General Baron von Füchter, accomplished some fine work during this same period. It has been said that he was but consulting the safety of his Imperial master's armed forces; but credit may safely be given the General for the discretion and despatch he used in distributing the huge body of troops at his command, without hitch or friction, to the various centres which it was his plan to occupy. His was a hand of iron, but he used it to good purpose; and the few errors of his own men were punished with an even more crushing severity than he showed where British offences were concerned.

The task of garrisoning those English ports with German soldiers was no light or easy one; no task for a light or gentle hand. In carrying out this undertaking a very little weakness, a very small display of indecision, might easily have meant an appalling amount of bloodshed. As it was, the whole business was completed in a wonderfully short while, and with remarkable smoothness. The judicial and municipal administration of these centres was to remain English; but supreme authority was vested in the officer commanding the German forces in each place, and the heads of such departments as the postal and the police, were German. No kind of public gathering or demonstration was permissible in these towns, unless under the auspices of the German officer in command, who in each case was given the rank of Governor of the town.

We had learned by this time that the Channel Fleet had not been entirely swept away. But a portion of it was destroyed, and the remaining ships had

been entrapped. It was strategy which had kept British ships from our coasts during the fatal week of the invasion. "The Destroyers" were responsible for our weak-kneed concessions to Berlin some years earlier, in the matter of wireless telegraphy. In the face of urgent recommendations to the contrary from experts, the Government had yielded to German pressure in the matter of making our own system interchangeable, and had even boasted of their diplomacy in thus ingratiating themselves with Germany. As a consequence, the enemy had been able to convey messages purporting to come from the British Admiralty and ordering British commanders to keep out of home waters.

That these messages should have been conveyed in secret code form was a mystery which subsequent investigations failed to solve. Some one had played traitor. But the history of the invasion has shown us that we had very many traitors among us in those days; and there came a time when the British public showed clearly that it was weary of Commissions of Inquiry. Where so many, if not indeed all of us, were at fault, where the penalty was so crushing, it was felt that there were other and more appropriate openings for official energy and public interest than the mere apportioning of blame and punishment, however well deserved.

The issue of what was called the "Invasion Budget" was Parliament's first important act, after the dispersal of the German forces in England, and the termination of the Government distribution of food supplies. The alterations of customs tariff were

not particularly notable. The House had agreed that revenue was the objective to be considered, and fiscal adjustments with reference to commerce were postponed for the time. The great change was in the income-tax. The minimum income to be taxed was £100 instead of, as formerly, £160. The scale ran like this: sixpence in the pound upon incomes of between £100 and £150, ninepence from that to £200, one shilling from that to £250, one and threepence from that to £500, one and sixpence from that to £1,000, two shillings upon all incomes of between £1,000 and £5,000, and four shillings in the pound upon all incomes of over £5,000.

It was on the day following that of the Invasion Budget issue that I received a letter from my sister Lucy, in Davenham Minster, telling me of my mother's serious illness, and asking me to come to her at once. And so, after a hurried visit to the South Kensington flat to explain my absence to Constance, I turned my back upon London, for the first time in a year, and journeyed down into Dorset.

II

ANCIENT LIGHTS

Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway.
. . . . . — COWPER.

IN the afternoon of a glorious summer's day, exactly three weeks after leaving London, I stood beside the newly filled grave of my mother in the moss-grown old churchyard of Davenham Minster.

My dear mother was not one of those whose end was hastened by the shock of England's disaster. Doctor Wardle gave us little hope of her recovery from the first. The immediate cause of death was pneumonia; but I gathered that my mother had come to the end of her store of vitality, and, it may be, of desire for life. I have sometimes thought that her complete freedom from those domestic cares of housekeeping, which had seemed to be the very source and fountainhead of continuous worry for her, may actually have robbed my mother of much of her hold upon life. In these last days I had been almost con-

tinuously beside her, and I know that she relinquished her life without one sigh that spelt regret.

Standing there at the edge of her grave in the hoary churchyard of the Minster, I was conscious of the loss of the last tie that bound me to the shelter of youth: the cared-for, irresponsible division of a man's life. The England of my youth was no more. Now, in the death of my mother, it seemed as if I had stepped out of one generation into another. I had entered a new generation, and was alone in it.

I was to sleep at my sister's house that night, but I had no wish to go there now. Doctor Wardle's forced gravity, his cheerful condolences, rather worried me. So it happened that I set out to walk from the churchyard, and presently found myself upon the winding upland road that led out of the rich Davenham valley, over the Ridgeway, and into the hilly Tarn Regis country, where I was born.

I drank a mug of cider in the quaint little beer-house kept by Gammer Joy in Tarn Regis, and read again the doggerel her grandfather had painted on its sign-board, in which the traveller was advised of the various uses of liquor, taken in moderation, and the evil effects of its abuse. Taken wisely, I remember, it was suggested that liquor proved the best of lubricants for the wheels of life. Mrs. Joy looked just as old and just as active and rosy as she had always looked for so long as I could remember; and she hospitably insisted upon my eating a large slab of her dough cake with my cider — a very excellent comestible it was.

The old dame's mood was cheerfully pessimistic —

that is to say, she was garrulous, and spoke cheerily of generally downward tendencies. Thus, the new rector, by her way of it, was of a decadent modern type, full of newfangled "Papish" notions as to church vestments and early services, and neglectful of traditional responsibilities connected with soup and coal and medical comforts. Cider was no longer what it used to be, I gathered, since the big brewers took it in hand, and spoiled the trade of those who had hand-presses. As for farming, Gammer Joy held that it was not near so good a trade for master or man with land at fifteen shillings the acre, as much of it was thereabouts, as it had been with rents up to two or three pounds, and food twice as dear as now.

"But there, Master Dick," said the old lady; "I suppose we be all Germans now — so they do tell me, however; an' if we be no better nor furriners here in Darset, why I doan't know as't matters gertly wha' cwomes to us at all. But I will say things wor different in your feyther's time, Master Dick — that they was. Ah doan't believe he'd ha' put up wi' this German business for a minute, that ah doan't."

I gathered that the new rector was an earnest young man and a hard worker; but, evidently, those of Gammer Joy's generation preferred my father's aloofness in conjunction with his regular material dispensations, and his habit of leaving folk severely to themselves, so far as their thoughts and feelings were concerned.

The cottagers with whom I talked that summer's evening cherished a monumental ignorance regarding

the real significance of the events which had shaken England to its very roots since I had last seen Tarn Regis. Gammer Joy's view seemed to be fairly typical. We had become German; England belonged to Germany; the Radicals had sold us to the Kaiser — and so forth. But no German soldiers had been seen in Dorset. The whole thing was shadowy, academic, a political business; suitable enough for the discussion of Londoners, no doubt, but, after all, of small bearing upon questions of real and intimate interest, such as the harvest, the weather, and the rate of wages.

"Sims queer, too, that us should be born again like, and become Germans," said one man to me; "but ah doan't know as it meakes much odds to the loike o' we; though ah hev heerd as how Farmer Jupp be thinkin' o' gettin' shut o' his shartharn bull that won the prize to Davenham, an' doin' wi' fower men an' a b'y, in place o' sevin. Well, o' course, us has to keep movin' wi' the times, as sayin' is; an' 'tis trew them uplan' pastures o' Farmer Jupp's they do be mos' onusual poor an' leery, as you med say."

Twilight already held the land in its grave embrace when I made my way along Abbott's Lane (my father had devoted months to the task of tracing the origin of that name) and began the ascent of Barebarrow, by crossing which diagonally one reaches the Davenham turnpike from Tarn Regis, a shorter route by nearly a mile than that of the road past the mill and over the bridge. And so, presently, my feet were treading turf which had probably been turf before the Christian era. Smooth and vast against the sky-

line, Barebarrow lay above me, like a mammoth at rest.

On its far side was our Tarn Regis giant, a famous figure cut in the turf, and clearly visible from the tower of Davenham Minster. Long ago, in my earliest childhood, village worthies had given me the story of this figure — how once upon a time a giant came and slew all the Tarn Regis flocks for his breakfast. Then he lay down to sleep behind Barebarrow, and while he slept the enraged shepherds and work-folk bound him with a thousand cart-ropes, and slew him with a thousand scythes and forks and other homely implements. And then, that posterity might know his fearsome bulk, they cut out the turf all round his form, and eke the outline of the club beside him, and left the figure there to commemorate their valour and the loss of their flocks. Some three hundred feet long it was, I think, with a club the length of a tall pine-tree. In any case, the Tarn Regis lad who would excel in feats of strength had but to spend the night of Midsummer's Eve in the crook of the giant's arm (as some one or two did every year), and other youths of the countryside could never stand a chance with him.

I paused on the ledge below the barrow beside a ruined shepherd's hut, and recalled the fact that here my father had unearthed sundry fragments of stone and pieces of implements which the Dorchester Museum curator had welcomed as very early British relics. They went back, I remembered, to long before the Roman period; to days possibly more remote than those of ancient Barebarrow himself. If you

refer to a good map you will find this spot surrounded by such indications of immemorial antiquity as "Tumuli," "British Village," and the like. The Roman encampment on the other side of Davenham Minster was modernity itself, I thought, compared with this ancient haunt of the neolithic forerunners of the early Briton; this resting-place of men whose doings were a half-forgotten story many centuries before the birth of Julius Cæsar.

I sat down on the grassy ledge and looked out across the lichen-covered roofs and squat, rugged church tower of Tarn Regis; and pictures rose in my mind, pictures to some extent inspired, perhaps, by scraps I had read of learned essays written by my father. He had loved this ancient ground; he had been used to finger the earth hereabouts as a man might finger his mistress's hair. I do not know what period my twilit fancy happened upon, but it was assuredly a later one than that of Barebarrow, for I saw shaggy warriors with huge pointless swords, their hilts decorated with the teeth of wild beasts — a Bronze Age vision, no doubt. I saw rude chariots of war, with murderous scythe-blades on their wheels — and, in a flash then, the figure of Boadicea: that valiant mother of our race, erect and fearless in her chariot —

> Regions Cæsar never knew,
> Thy posterity shall sway!

"Thy posterity shall sway!" If you repeat the lines to yourself you may see the outline of my vision. There at the foot of Barebarrow I saw that Queen of ancient Britons at the head of her wild, shaggy

legions. "The Roman Army can never withstand the shouts and clamour of so many thousands, far less their shock and fury," said the Queen. I saw her lead her valiant horde upon Colchester, and for me the ancient rudeness of it all was shot through and through with glimpses of the scientific sacking of Colchester, as I had read of it but a few weeks ago. I saw the advance of the Roman Governor; the awful slaughter of the British; the end of the brave Queen who could not brook defeat: the most heart-stirring episode in English history.

"Thy posterity shall sway!" I recalled the solemn splendour of another great Queen's passing — that which I had seen with my own eyes while still a lad at Rugby: the stately gathering of the great ships at Spithead; the end of Victoria the Good. No more than a step it seemed from my vision of the unconquerable Boadicea. But to that other onslaught upon Colchester — to General von Füchter's slaughter of women and children and unarmed men in streets of houses whose ashes must be warm yet — O Lord, how far! I thought. Could it really be that a thousand years of inviolability had been broken, ended, in those few wild days; ended for ever?

Lights twinkled now among the nestling houses of the little place where I was born. They made me think of torches, the clash of arms, the spacious mediæval days when Davenham Minster supported a great monastery, whose lordly abbot owned the land Tarn Regis stood upon.

And then the little lights grew misty and dim in my eyes as glimpses came of my own early days; of

play on that very ridge-side where I sat now, where I had then romantically sworn friendship with George Stairs on the eve of my departure for Elstree School, and his leaving with his father for Canada. How had I kept my vow? Where was George Stairs now? There was not a foot of that countryside we had not roamed together. My eyes pricked as I looked and listened. Exactly so, I thought, the sheep-bells had sounded below Barebarrow when I had lain listening to them in that low-pitched back bedroom of the Rectory which I had been proud to hear called "Dick's Room," after my first experience of sleeping alone.

Then for a space my mind was blank as the dark valley beyond the village — until thoughts and pictures of recent happenings began to oust the gentler memories, and I lived over again the mad, wild, tragic week which culminated in the massacre of the North London trenches. But in the light of my previous musings I saw these happenings differently, more personally, than in the actual experience of them. It seemed now that not my country only, but myself, had been struck down and humbled to the dust by the soldiers of the Kaiser. I saw the broad fair faces of the German cavalry as they had sat their horse in Whitehall on the evening of Black Saturday. I heard again the clank of their arms, the barking of guttural orders. Could it be that they had mastered England? that for nine long years we were to be encircled by their garrisons? Nine years of helotry!

A sudden coolness in the air reminded me of the lateness of the hour, and I rose and began to cross Barebarrow.

But this ancient land was British in every blade of its grass, I thought — root and crop, hill and dale, above and beneath, no single sod of it but was British. Surely nothing could alter that. Nine years of helotry! I heard again the confused din of the Westminster Riot; the frantic crowd's insistent demand for surrender, for unconditional surrender. And now the nation's word was pledged. Our heads were bowed for nine years long.

Suddenly, then, as I descended upon the turnpike, a quite new thought came to me. The invasion had overridden all law, all custom, all understandings. The invasion was an act of sheer lawless brutality. No surrender could bind a people to submission in the face of such an outrage as that. The Germans must be driven out; the British people must rise and cast them out, and overthrow for ever their insolent dominion. But too many of the English people were — like myself! Well, they must learn; we must all learn; every able-bodied man must learn; for a blow had to be struck that should free England for ever. The country must be awakened to realization of that need. We owed so much to the brave ones who gave us England; so much could be demanded of us by those that came after. The thing had got to be.

I walked fast, I remember, and singing through my head as I entered Davenham Minster, long after my sister's supper hour, were the lines to which I had never till then paid any sort of heed:

> Regions Cæsar never knew,
> Thy posterity shall sway!

III

THE RETURN TO LONDON

Oh ! 'tis easy
To beget great deeds ; bnt in the rearing of them —
The threading in cold blood each mean detail,
And furze brake of half-pertinent circumstance —
There lies the self-denial. — CHARLES KINGSLEY.

I SPENT but one other day in Dorset after my walk out to Tarn Regis, and then took train in the morning for London.

I believe I have said before that Doctor Wardle, my sister's husband, was prosperous and popular. The fact made it natural for me to accept my mother's disposition of her tiny property, which, in a couple of sentences, she had bequeathed solely to me. My sister had no need of the hundred and fifty pounds a year that was derived from my mother's little capital, which had been invested in Canadian securities and was unaffected by England's losses. Thus I was now possessed of means sufficient to provide me with the actual necessities of life; and, though I had not thought of it before, realization of this came to me while I attended to the winding up of my mother's small affairs, bringing with it a certain sense of comfort and security.

It was with a strongly hopeful feeling, a sense

almost of elation, that I stepped from the train at Waterloo. My quiet days and nights in Dorset had taught me something; and, particularly, I had gained much, in conviction and in hope, from the evening spent by Barebarrow. I cannot say that I had any definite plans, but I was awake to a genuine sense of duty to my native land, and that was as strange a thing for me as for a great majority of my fellow countrymen. I was convinced that a great task awaited us all, and I determined upon the performance of my part in it. I suppose I trusted that London would show me the particular form that my effort should take. Meanwhile, as a convert, the missionary feeling was strong in me.

I might have made shift to afford better quarters, perhaps, but it was to my original lodging in Bloomsbury that I drove from Waterloo. Some few belongings of mine were there, and I entertained a friendly sort of feeling for my good-hearted but slatternly landlady, and for poor, overworked Bessie, with her broad, generally smutty face, and lingering remains of a Dorset accent. The part of London with which I was familiar had resumed its normal aspect now, and people were going about their ordinary avocations very much as though England never had been invaded.

But in the north and east of the capital were streets of burned and blackened houses, and the Epping and Romford districts were one wilderness of ruins, and of graves; while across East Anglia, from the coast to the Thames, the trail of the invaders was as the track of a locust plague, but more terrible by reason

of its blood-soaked trenches, its innumerable shallow graves, and its charred remains of once prosperous towns. Hundreds of ruined farmers and small landholders were working as navvies at bridge and road and railway repairs.

A great many people had been ruined during those few nightmare days of the invasion, and every man in England was burdened now with a scale of taxation never before known in the country. But business had resumed its sway, and London looked very much as ever. The need there was for a general making good, from London to the Wash, provided a great deal of employment, and the Government had taken such steps as it could to make credit easy. But Consols were still as low as sixty-eight; prices had not yet fallen to the normal level, and money was everywhere scarce.

In the middle afternoon I set out for South Kensington to see Constance Grey, to whom I had written only once during my absence, and then only to tell her of my mother's death. She had replied by telegraph, a message of warm and friendly sympathy. I knew well that she was always busy, and, like most moderns who have written professionally, I suppose we were both bad correspondents. Now there was much of which I wanted to talk with Constance, and it was with a feeling of sharp disappointment that I learned from the servant at the flat that she was not at home. Mrs. Van Homrey was in, however, and in a few moments I was with her in the little drawing-room where I had passed the night of London's exhausted sleep on Black Saturday.

"Yes, you have just missed my niece," said Mrs. Van Homrey, after a kindly reference to the strip of crepe on my arm. "She has gone in to Victoria Street to a 'conference of the powers' of John Crondall's convening. Oh, didn't you know he was here again? Yes, he arrived last week, and, as usual, is up to his neck in affairs already, and Constance with him. I verily believe that child has discovered the secret of perpetual motion."

At first mention of John Crondall's name my heart had warmed to its recollection of the man, and a pleasurable thought of meeting him again. And immediately then the warm feeling had been penetrated by a vague sense of disquiet, when Mrs. Van Homrey spoke of his affairs — "and Constance with him." But I was not then conscious of the meaning of my momentary discomfort, though, both then and afterwards, I read emphasis and meaning into Mrs. Van Homrey's coupling of the two names. I asked what the "conference" was about, but gathered that Mrs. Van Homrey was not very fully informed.

"I know they are to meet these young Canadian preachers who are so tremendously praised by the *Standard* —— What are their names, again? Tcha! How treacherous my memory grows! You know the men I mean. John Crondall met them the day after their arrival last week, and is enthusiastic about them."

I felt very much out of the movement. During the few days immediately preceding my mother's death, and since then, I had not even seen a newspaper, and, being unusually preoccupied, not only

over the events of my stay at Davenham Minster, but by developments in my own thoughts, I seemed to have lost touch with current affairs.

"And what does John Crondall think of the outlook?" I asked.

"Well, I think his fear is that people in the country — outside East Anglia, of course — may fail to realize all that the invasion has meant and will mean; and that Londoners and townsfolk generally may slip back into absorption in business and in pleasure as soon as they can afford that again, and forget the fact that England is practically under Germany's heel still."

"The taxes will hardly allow them to do that, surely," I said.

"Well, I don't know. The English are a wonderful people. The invasion was so swift and sudden; the opposition to it was so comparatively trifling; surrender and peace came so soon, that really I don't know but what John is right. He generally is. You must remember that millions of the people have not seen a German soldier. They have had no discipline yet. Even here in London, as soon as the people spoke decidedly, peace followed. They did not have to strike a blow. They did not feel a blow. They were not with you and Conny, remember, at those awful trenches. Anyhow, John thinks the danger is lest they forget again, and regard the whole tragic business as a new proof of England's ability to 'muddle through' anything, without any assistance from them. Of course, England's wealth is still great, and her recuperative powers are wonderful;

but John Crondall holds that, in spite of that, submission to nine years of German occupation and German tribute-paying will mean the end of the British Empire."

"And he feels that the people must be stirred into seeing that and acting on it?" I said, recalling my own thoughts during the night walk from Barebarrow.

"Yes, I suppose that is his view. But, now I come to think of it, why should you waste your time in talking to an old woman who can only give you echoes? It is only half an hour since Conny started. Why not hurry on to John Crondall's place, and join them there? He has often spoken of you, Conny tells me."

This seemed to me too good a suggestion to neglect, and ten minutes later I was on my way to St. James's Park by underground railway. I bought an evening paper on my way, and read an announcement to the effect that General Baron von Füchter, after returning to Portsmouth from his visit to Berlin, had definitely decided that Portsmouth and Devonport could no longer remain British naval bases, and that no British sailors or soldiers in uniform could in future be admitted into any of the towns in England now occupied by Germany.

IV

THE CONFERENCE

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right;
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

A FEW seconds after his servant had shown me into the dining-room of John Crondall's flat, the man himself entered to me with a rush, as his manner was, both hands outstretched to welcome me.

"Good man!" he said. "I've had fine news of you from Constance Grey, and now you're here to confirm it. Splendid!"

And then, with sudden gravity, and a glance at my coat sleeve: "I heard of your loss. I know what it means. I lost my mother when I was in Port Arthur, and I know London looked different because of it when I got back. It's a big wrench; one we've all got to face."

"Yes. I think my mother died without regret; she was very tired."

There was a pause, and then I said:

"But I may have chosen my time badly, to-day.

Mrs. Van Homrey said you had a conference. If you ——"

"Tut, tut, man! Don't talk nonsense. I was just going to say how well you'd timed things. I don't know about a conference, but Constance is here, and Varley, and Sir Herbert Tate — he took on the secretaryship of the Army League, you know, after Gilbert chucked it — and Winchester. You know Winchester, the Australian rough-rider, who did such fine work with his bushman corps in the South African war — and — let me see! And Forbes Thompson, the great rifle clubman, you know; *and* the Canadian preachers — splendid fellows, by Jove! Simply splendid they are, I can tell you. I look for great things from those two. Stairs is English, of course, but he's been nearly all his life in British Columbia and the Northwest, and he's got all the eternal youth, the fire and grit and enthusiasm of the Canadian, with — somehow, something else as well — good. His chum, Reynolds, is an out-and-out Canadian, born in Toronto of Canadian parents. Gad, there's solid timber in that chap, I can tell you. But, look here! Come right in, and take a hand. I'm awfully glad you came. I heard all about *The Mass* and that; but, bless me, I can see in your eye that that's all past and done with for ever. By the way, I heard last night that your Mr. Clement Blaine had got a job after his own heart, in the pay of the Germans at Chatham — interpreter in the passport office, or some such a thing. What a man! Well, come along in, my dear chap, and give us the benefit of your wisdom."

We were leaving the room now.

"I knew you'd like Constance," he said. "She's the real thing, isn't she?"

I despised myself for the hint of chill his words brought me. What right had I to suspect or resent? And in any case John Crondall spoke in his customary frank way, with never a hint of afterthought.

"Yes," I said; "she's splendid."

"And such a head-piece, my boy. By Jove, she has a better head for business than —— Here we are, then."

Constance Grey was naturally the first to greet me in the big room where John Crondall did his work and met his friends. There was welcome in her beautiful eyes, but, obviously, Constance was very much preoccupied. Then I was presented to Sir Morell Strachey, Sir Herbert Tate, and Forbes Thompson, and then to the Canadian parson, the Rev. George Stairs. I had paid no attention to the name when Crondall had mentioned it in the other room. Now, as he named the parson again, I looked into the man's face, and ——

"Mordan? Why, not Dick Mordan, of Tarn Regis?" said the parson.

"By gad! George Stairs! I was thinking of you on the side of Barebarrow the night before last."

"And I was thinking of you, Dicky Mordan, yesterday afternoon, when I met the present rector of Tarn Regis at a friend's house."

It was a long strong handshake that we exchanged. Sixteen years on the young side of thirty is a con-

siderable stretch of time, and all that had passed since I had last seen my old Tarn Regis playmate.

Stairs introduced me to his friend, Reynolds, and I learned the curious fact that this comrade and chum of my old friend's was also a parson, but not of Stairs's church. Reynolds had qualified at a theological training college in Ontario, and had been Congregational minister in the parish of which Stairs had been vicar for the last three years.

There was a big table in the middle of the room, littered over with papers and writing materials. About this table we presently all found seats.

"Now look here, my friends," said John Crondall, "this is no time for ceremoniousness, apologies, and the rest of it, and I'm not going to indulge in any. No doubt we've all of us got special interests of our own, but there's one we all share; and it comes first with all of us, I think. We all want the same thing for England and the Empire, and we all want to do what we can to help. It's because of that I dismiss the ceremonies, and don't say anything about the fear of boring you, and all that. I don't even make exceptions of you, Stairs, or you, Reynolds. I tell you quite frankly I want to poke and pry into your plans. I want to know all about 'em. I've sense enough to see that you wield a big influence. I am certain I have your sympathy in my aims. And I want to find out how far I can make your aims help my aims. All I know is that you have addressed three meetings, each bigger than the last; and that your preaching is the real right thing. Now I want

you to tell us as much as you will about your plans. You know we are all friends here."

Stairs looked at Reynolds, and Reynolds nodded at Stairs.

"Well," said the latter, smiling, first at Crondall, and then at me, "our plans are simplicity itself. In Canada we have not risen yet to the cultivation of much diplomacy. We don't understand anything of your high politics, and we don't believe in roundabout methods. For instance, I suppose here in England you don't find parsons of one denomination working in partnership much with parsons of another denomination. Well, now, when I took over from my predecessor at Kooteray, I found my friend Reynolds doing a fine work there, among the farmers and miners, as Congregational minister. He was doing precisely the work I wanted to do; but there was only one of him. Was I to fight shy of him, or set to work, as it were, in opposition to him? Well, anyhow, that didn't seem to me the way. We had our own places of worship; but, for the rest, both desiring the one thing — the Christian living of the folk in our district — we worked absolutely shoulder to shoulder. There were a few worthy folk who objected; but when Reynolds and I came to talk it over, we decided that these had as much religion as was good for them already, and that we could afford rather to ignore them, if by joint working we could rope in the folk who had next to none at all —— You must forgive my slang, Miss Grey."

Constance smiled across at the parson.

"You forget, Mr. Stairs, I grew up on the veld," she said.

"Ah, to be sure; I suppose one is as close to the earth and the realities there as in Canada."

"Quite," said Crondall. "And, anyhow, we are not doing any apologies to-day; so please go ahead."

"Well," continued George Stairs, "we often talked over Old Country affairs, Reynolds and I. Reynolds had only spent three months over here in his life, but I fancy I learned more from him than he from me."

"That's a mistake, of course," said Reynolds. "He had the facts and the knowledge. I merely supplied a fresh point of view — home-grown Canadian."

"Ah, well, we found ourselves very much in agreement, anyhow, about Home affairs and about the position of the Anglican Church in Canada; the need there is for less exclusiveness and more direct methods. The idea of coming Home and preaching through England, a kind of pilgrimage — that was entirely Reynolds's own. I would have come with him gladly, when we had our district in good going order out there. But, you see, I had no money. My friend had a little. Then my father died. He had been ailing for a long time, and I verily think the news of the invasion broke his heart. He died in the same week that it reached him, and left his two farms, with some small house property, to me.

"My father's death meant for me a considerable break. The news from England shocked me inexpressibly. It was such a terrible realization of the very fears that Reynolds and myself had so often dis-

cussed — the climax and penalty of England's mad disregard of duty; of every other consideration except pleasure, easy living, comfort, and money-making."

"This is the pivot of the whole business, that duty question," interposed Crondall. "It was your handling of that on Tuesday that burdened you with my acquaintance. I listened to that, and I said, 'Mr. George Stairs and you have got to meet, John Crondall!' But I didn't mean to interrupt."

"Well, as I say, I found myself rather at a parting of the ways, and then came my good friend here, and he said, 'What about these farms and houses of yours, Stairs? They represent an income. What are you going to do about it?' And — well, you see, that settled it. We just packed our bags and came over."

"And now that you are here?" said John Crondall.

"Well, you heard what we had to say the other afternoon?"

"I did — every word of it."

"Well, that's what we are here for. Our aim is to take that message to every man and woman in this country; and we believe God will give us zest and strength enough to bring it home to them — to make them *feel* the truth of it. Your aim, naturally, is political and patriotic. I don't think you can have any warmer sympathizers than Reynolds and myself. But our part, as you see, is another one, and outside politics. We believe the folk at Home have lost their bearings; their compasses want adjusting. I say

here what I should not venture to admit to a less sympathetic and indulgent audience: Reynolds and myself aim at arousing, by God's will, the sleeping sense of duty in our kinsmen here at Home. We have no elaborate system, no finesse, no complicated issues to consider. Our message is simply: 'You have forgotten Duty; and the Christian life is not possible while Duty remains forgotten or ignored.' Our purpose is just to give the message; to prove it; make it real; make it felt."

Crondall had been looking straight at the speaker while he listened, his face resting between his two hands, his elbows planted squarely on the table. Now he seemed to pounce down upon Stairs's last words.

"And yet you say your part is another one than ours. But why not the same? Why not the very essence and soul of our part, Stairs?"

"Gad — he's right!" said Sir Herbert Tate, in an undertone. Reynolds leaned forward in his chair, his lean, keen face alight.

"Why not the very soul of our part, Stairs — the essential first step toward our end? Our part is to urge a certain specific duty on them — a duty we reckon urgent and vital to the nation. But we can't do that unless we, or you, can first do your part — rousing them to the sense of duty — Duty itself. Man, but your part is the foundation of our part — foundation, walls, roof, corner-stone, complete! We only give the structure a name. Why, I give you my word, Stairs, that that address of yours on Tuesday was the finest piece of patriotic exhortation I ever listened to."

"But — it's very kind of you to say so; but I never mentioned King or country."

"Exactly! You gave them the root of the whole matter. You cleared a way into their hearts and heads which is open now for news of King and country. It's as though I had to collect some money for an orphanage from a people who'd never heard of charity. Before I see the people you teach 'em the meaning and beauty of charity — wake the charitable sense in them. You needn't bother mentioning orphanages; but if I come along in your rear, my chances of collecting the money are a deal rosier than if you hadn't been there first — what?"

"I see — I see," said Stairs, slowly.

"Mr. Crondall, you ought to have been a Canadian," said Reynolds, in his dry way. His use of the "Mr.," even to a man who had no hesitation in calling him plain "Reynolds," was just one of the tiny points of distinction between himself and Stairs.

"Oh, Canada has taught me something; and so have South Africa and India; and so have you and Stairs, with your mission, or pilgrimage, or whatever it is — your Message."

"Well," said Stairs, "it seems to me your view of our pilgrimage is a very kindly, and perhaps flattering one; and as I have said, your aims as a citizen of the Empire and a lover of the Old Country could not have warmer sympathizers than Reynolds and myself; but ——"

"Mind, I'm not trying to turn your religious teaching to any ignoble purpose," said Crondall,

quickly. "I am not asking you to introduce a single new word or thought into it for my sake."

"That's so," said Reynolds, his eye upon Stairs.

"Quite so, quite so," said Stairs. "And, of course, I am with you in all you hope for; but you know, Crondall, religion is perhaps a rather different matter to a parson from what it is to you. Forgive me if I put it clumsily, but ——"

And now, greatly daring, I ventured upon an interruption, speaking upon impulse, without consideration, and hearing my voice as though it were something outside myself.

"George Stairs," I said — and I fancy the thoughts of both of us went back sixteen years — "what was it you thought about the Congregational minister when you took over your post at Kooteray? How did you decide to treat him? Did you ever regret the partnership?"

"Now if that isn't straight out Western fashion!" murmured Reynolds. Constance beamed at me from her place beside John Crondall.

"I leave it at that," said our host.

"A palpable bull's-eye," said Forbes Thompson.

I hardly needed George Stairs's friendly clap on the shoulder, nor the assurance of his:

"You are right, Dick. You have shown me my way in three words."

"Good," said Reynolds. "Well, now I don't mind saying what I wouldn't have said before, that among the notes we drew up nearly three years ago ——"

"You drew up, my friend," said Stairs.

"Among the notes we drew up, I say, on this ques-

tion of neglected duty, were details as to the citizen's obligations regarding the defence of his home and native land, with special reference to the callous neglect of Lord Roberts's campaign of warning and exhortation. Now, Stairs, you know as well as I do, you wrote with your own hand the passage about the Englishman's sphere of duty being as much wider than his country as Greater Britain was wider than Great Britain. You know you did."

"Oh, you can count me in, all right, Reynolds; you know I'm not one for half-measures."

"Well, now, my friends, I believe I see daylight. By joining hands I really believe we are going to accomplish something for England." Crondall looked round the table at the faces of his friends. "We are all agreed, I know, that the present danger is the danger Kipling tried to warn us about years and years ago."

"'Lest we forget!'" quoted Sir Herbert quietly.

"Exactly. There are so many in England who have neither seen nor felt anything of the blow we have had."

And here I told them something of what I had seen and heard in Dorset; how remote and unreal the whole thing was to folk there.

"That's it, exactly," continued Crondall. "That's one difficulty which has just got to be overcome. Another is the danger that, among those who did see and feel something of it, here in London, and even in East Anglia, the habit of apathy in national matters, and the calls of business and pleasure may mean forgetting, indifference — the old fatal neglect. You

see, we must remember that, crushing as the blow was, it did not actually reach so very many people. It did not force them to get up and fight for their lives. It was all over so soon. Directly they cried out, 'The Destroyers' answered with surrender, and so helped to strengthen the fatal delusion they had cherished so long, that everything is a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence."

"'They'll never go for England, because England's got the dibs,'" quoted Forbes Thompson, with a nod of assent.

"Yes, yes. 'Make alliances, and leave me to my business!' One knows it all so well. But, mind you, even to the blindest of them, the invasion has meant something."

"And the income-tax will mean something to 'em, too," said Sir Morell Strachey.

"Yes. But the English purse is deep, and the Englishman has long years of money-spinning freedom from discipline behind him. Still, here is this brutal fact of the invasion. Here we are actually condemned to nine years of life inside a circle of German encampments on English soil, with a hundred millions a year of tribute to pay for the right to live in our own England. Now my notion is that the lesson must not be lost. The teaching of the thing must be forced home. It must be burnt into these happy-go-lucky countrymen of ours — if Stairs and Reynolds are to achieve their end, or we ours."

"Our aim is to awake the sense of duty which seems to us to have become atrophied, even among the professedly religious," said Stairs.

"And ours," said Crondall, sharp as steel, "is to ram home your teaching, and to show them that the nearest duty to their hand is their duty to the State, to the Race, to their children — the duty of freeing England and throwing over German dominion."

"To render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," said Reynolds. And Stairs nodded agreement.

"Now, by my way of it, Stairs and Reynolds must succeed before we can succeed," said Crondall. "That is my view, and because that is so, you can both look to me, up till the last breath in me, for any kind of support I can give you — for any kind of support at all. But that's not all. Where you sow, I mean to reap. We both want substantially the same harvest — mine is part of yours. I know I can count on you all. You, Stairs, and you, Reynolds, are going to carry your Message through England. I propose to follow in your wake with mine. You rouse them to the sense of duty; I show them their duty. You make them ready to do their duty; I show it them. I'll have a lecturer. I'll get pictures. They shall *feel* the invasion, and know what the German occupation means. You shall convert them, and I'll enlist them."

"Enlist them! By Jove! that's an idea," said Forbes Thompson. "A patriotic league, a league of defenders, a nation in arms."

"The Liberators!"

"Ah! Yes, the Liberators."

"Or the Patriots, simply?"

"I would enrol them just as citizens," said Cron-

dall. "By that time they should have learned the meaning of the word."

"Yes, by Jove! it is good enough — just 'The Citizens,'" said Sir Morell Strachey.

And then a servant came in with a message for Forbes Thompson, and we realized that dinner-time had come and almost gone. But we were in no mood for separating just then, and so every one welcomed John Crondall's invitation to dine with him at a neighbouring hotel.

V

MY OWN PART

Free men freely work;
Whoever fears God, fears to sit at ease.
E. B. Browning.

CONSTANCE GREY and myself were the last of John Crondall's guests to leave him on that evening of the conference. As soon as we three were alone, Constance turned to Crondall, and said:

"You must expect to have me among your camp followers if I find Aunt Mary can stand the travelling. I dare say there will be little things I can do."

"Things you can do! By George, I should think so!" said Crondall. "I shall look to you to capture the women; and if we get the women, it will surprise me if we don't get the men as well. Besides, don't you fancy I have forgotten your prowess as a speaker in Cape Town and Pretoria. You remember that meeting of your father's, when you saved him from the wrath of Vrow Bischoff? Why, of course, I reckon on you. We'll have special women's meetings."

"And where do I come in?" I asked, with an assumed lightness of tone which was far from expressing my feeling.

"Yes," said Crondall, eying me thoughtfully; "I've been thinking of that."

As he said that, I had a swift vision of myself and my record, as both must have appeared to a man like Crondall, whose whole life had been spent in patriotic effort. The vision was a good corrective for the unworthy shafts of jealousy — for that no doubt they were — which had come to me with John Crondall's references to Constance. I was admitted cordially into the confidencec of these people from whom, on my record, I scarcely deserved common courtesy. It was with a distinctly chastened mind that I gave them both some outline of the thoughts and resolutions which had come to me during my evening beside Barebarrow, overlooking sleepy little Tarn Regis.

"It's a kind of national telepathy," said Crondall. "God send it's at work in other counties besides Dorset."

"It had need be," I told them; "for all those that I spoke to in Dorset accepted the German occupation like a thing as absolutely outside their purview as the movements of the planets."

"Yes, they want a lot of stirring, I know; but I believe we shall stir 'em all right. But about your part in the campaign. Of course, I recognize that every one has to earn his living, just as much now as before. But yet I know you'd like to be in this thing, Dick Mordan, and I believe you can help it a lot. What I thought of was this: I shall want a secretary, and want him very badly. He will be the man who will do half my work. On the other hand, I can't pay him much, for every cent of my income will

be wanted in the campaign, and a good deal more besides. The thing is, would you tackle it, for the sake of the cause, for a couple of hundred a year? Of course, I should stand all running expenses. What do you think? It's not much of an offer, but it would keep us all together? "

Constance looked expectantly at me, and I realized with a sudden thrill the uses of even such small means as I now possessed.

"Well, no," I said; "I couldn't agree to that." The pupils of John Crondall's eyes contracted sharply, and a pained, wondering look crept into the face I loved, the vivid, expressive face of Constance Grey. "But what I would put my whole heart and soul into, would be working as your secretary for the sake of the cause, as long as you could stand the running expense, and — and longer."

I think the next minute was the happiest I had ever known. I dare say it seems a small enough matter, but it was the only thing of the kind I had ever been able to do. These friends of mine had always given so much to our country's cause. I had felt myself so far beneath them in this. Now, as John Crondall's strong hand came down on my shoulder, and Constance's bright eyes shone upon me in affectionate approval, my heart swelled within me, with something of the glad pride which should be the possession of every man, as it indubitably is of every true citizen and patriot.

"You see," I explained deprecatingly, as Crondall swayed my shoulder affectionately to and fro in his firm grip; "I have become a sort of a minor capital-

ist. I have about a hundred and fifty a year coming in, and so I'm as free as I am glad to work with you, and — there'll be two hundred more for the campaign, you see."

"God bless you, old chap! You and Constance and I, we'll move mountains — even the great mountain of apathy — between us. Sir Herbert offers a thousand pounds toward expenses, and Forbes Thompson and Varley are ready to speak for us anywhere we like, and Winchester has a pal who he says will work wonders as a kind of advance agent. I'm pretty sure of Government help, too — or Opposition help; they'll be governing before Christmas, you'll find. Now, we all meet here again the day after to-morrow. We three will see each other to-morrow, I expect. I must write a stack of letters before the midnight post."

"Well, can I lend a hand?" I asked.

"No, not to-night, Mr. Secretary Dick, thank you! But it's late. Will you take Constance home? I'll get my fellow to whistle up a cab."

Ten minutes earlier I should have been chilled by his implied guardianship of Constance; but now I had that within which warmed me through and through: the most effectual kind of protection against chill. So all was settled, and we left John Crondall to his letters. And, driving out to South Kensington, we talked over our hopes, Constance and I, as partners in one cause.

"This is the beginning of everything for me, Constance," I said, when we parted in the hall below her flat.

"It is going to be the beginning of very much for a good many," she said, as she gave me her hand.

"I wonder if you know how much — for me!"

"I think so. I am tremendously glad about it all."

But she did not know, could not know, just how much it meant to me.

"Good night, my patriotic Muse!" I said.

"Good night, Mr. Secretary Dick!"

And so we parted on the night of my return to London.

VI

PREPARATIONS

We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town;
We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down.
Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power, with the Need,
Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.

. . . . . .

Follow after — follow after — for the harvest is sown:
By the bones about the wayside ye shall come to your own!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

NEVER before had I known days so full, so compact of effort and achievement, as were those of the week following the conference in John Crondall's rooms. I could well appreciate Winchester's statement when he said that: "John Crondall is known through three Continents as a glutton for work."

Our little circle represented Canada, South Africa, Australia, and the Mother Country; and, while I admit that my old friend, George Stairs, and his Canadian-born partner, Reynolds, could give points to most people in the matter of unwearying energy, yet I am proud to report that the member of our circle who, so to say, worked us all to a standstill was John Crondall, an Englishman born and bred. I said as much in the presence of them all, and when

my verdict was generally endorsed, John Crondall qualified it with the remark:

"Well, I can only say that pretty nearly all I know about work I learned in the Colonies."

And I learned later on to realize the justice of this qualification. Colonial life does teach directness and concentration. Action of any sort in England was at that time hedged about by innumerable complications and cross issues and formalities, many of which we have won clear from since then. Perhaps it was the strength of our Colonial support which set the pace of our procedure. Whatever the cause, I know I never worked harder, or accomplished more; and I had never been so happy.

I think John Crondall must have interviewed from two to three hundred prominent politicians and members of the official world during that week. I have heard it said by men who should know, that the money Crondall spent in cable messages to the Colonies that week was the price of the first Imperial Parliament ever assembled in Westminster Hall. I use these words in their true sense, their modern sense, of course. Nominally, the House of Commons had long been the "Imperial" Parliament.

I know that week's work established *The Citizens* as an already powerful organization, with a long list of names famous in history among its members, with a substantial banking account, and with volunteer agents in every great centre in the kingdom. The motto and watchword of *The Citizens*, as engraved upon a little bronze medal of membership, was:

"For God; our Race; and Duty." The oath of enrolment said:

"I —— do hereby undertake and promise to do my duty to God, to our Race, and to the British Empire to the utmost limit of my ability, without fear and without compromise, so help me God!"

John Crondall interviewed the editors of most of the leading London newspapers during that week, and thereby earned a discreet measure of journalistic support for his campaign. There was a great need of discretion here, for our papers were carefully studied in Berlin, as well as by the German Generals commanding the various English towns now occupied by the Kaiser's troops. It was, of course, most important that no friction should be caused at this stage.

But it was with regard to the preaching pilgrimage of the two Canadian parsons that Crondall's friends of the Press rendered us the greatest possible service. Here no particular reticence was called for, and the Press could be, and was, unreservedly helpful and generous. In estimating the marvellous achievements of the two preachers, I do not think enough weight has been attached to the great services rendered to their mission by such journals as the great London daily which published each morning a column headed, "The New Evangel," and, indeed, by all the newspapers both in London and the provinces.

We were not directly aiming, during that first week, at enrolling members. No recruiting had been done. Yet when, at the end of the week, a meeting

of the executive committee was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, the founder, John Crondall, was able to submit a list of close upon six hundred sworn members of *The Citizens;* and, of these, I suppose fully five hundred were men of high standing in the world of politics, the Services, commerce, and the professions. Among them were three dukes, twenty-three peers, a Field Marshal, six newspaper proprietors, eleven editors, seven of the wealthiest men in England, and ninety-eight prominent Members of Parliament. And, as I say, no systematic recruiting had been done.

At that meeting of the executive a great deal of important business was transacted. John Crondall was able to announce a credit balance of ten thousand pounds, with powers to overdraw under guarantee at the Bank of England. A simple code of membership rules and objects was drawn up for publication, and a short code of secret rules was formed, by which every sworn member was to be bound. These rules stipulated for implicit obedience to the decision and orders of the executive, and by these every member was bound to take a certain course of rifle drill, and to respond immediately to any call that should be made for military service within the British Isles during a period of twelve months from the date of enrolment. John Crondall announced that there was every hope of *The Citizens* obtaining from the Government a grant of one service rifle and one hundred rounds of ammunition for every member who could pass a simple medical examination.

"We may not actually secure this grant until after

the general election," Crondall explained; "but it can be regarded as a certain asset."

It was decided that, officially, there should be no connection between the Canadian preachers, as every one called them, and the propaganda of *The Citizens.* But it was also privately agreed that steps should be taken to follow the Canadians throughout their pilgrimage with lectures and addresses, and meetings at which members could be enrolled upon the roster of *The Citizens,* including volunteer instructors in rifle drill. My friend Stairs attended this meeting with Reynolds, and, after discussion, it was agreed that, for the present, they should not visit the towns occupied by the Germans.

"The people there have their lesson before them every day and all day long," said John Crondall. "The folk we want to reach are those who have not yet learned their lesson. My advice is to attack London first. Enlist London on your side, and on that go to the provinces."

There was a good deal of discussion over this, and finally an offer John Crondall made was accepted by Stairs and Reynolds, and our meeting was brought to a close. What Crondall said was this:

"To-day is Monday. There is still a great deal of detail to be attended to. Officially, there must be no connection between Stairs and Reynolds and *The Citizens.* Actually, we know the connection is vital. Give me the rest of this week for arrangements, and I promise that we shall all gain by it. I will not appear in the matter, and I will see you each evening

for consultation. Your pilgrimage shall begin on Sunday, and ours within a day or so of that."

Then followed another week of tense effort. Stairs and Reynolds both addressed minor gatherings during the week, and met John Crondall every evening for consultation. On Wednesday the principal Imperialistic newspaper in London appeared with a long leading article and three columns of descriptive exposition of "The New Evangel." On the same day the papers published despatches telling of the departure from their various homes of the Premiers, and two specially elected representatives of all the British Colonies, who were coming to England for an Imperial Conference at Westminster. The Government's resignation was expected within the month, and writs for the election were to be issued immediately afterwards.

On Wednesday evening and Thursday morning the newspapers of London alone published one hundred and thirteen columns of matter regarding the message and the pilgrimage of the Rev. George Stairs and the Rev. Arthur J. Reynolds. During the latter part of the week all London was agog over the Canadian preachers. As yet, very little had appeared in print regarding *The Citizens*.

On Sunday morning at three o'clock John Crondall went into his bedroom to sleep, and I slept in the room he had set aside for me in his flat — too tired out to undress. Even Crondall's iron frame was weary that night, and he admitted to me before retiring from a table at which we had kept three type-

writers busy till long after midnight, that he had reached his limit and must rest.

"I couldn't stand another hour of it — unless it were necessary, you know," was his way of putting it.

By my persuasion he kept his bed during a good slice of Sunday morning, and lunched with me at Constance Grey's flat. He always said that Mrs. Van Homrey was the most restful tonic London could supply to any man. I went to the morning service at Westminster Abbey that day with Constance, and listened to a magnificent sermon from the Bishop of London, whose text was drawn from the sixth chapter of Exodus: "And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God."

The Bishop struck a strong note of hopefulness, but there was also warning and exhortation in his discourse. He spoke of sons of our race who had gone into far countries, and, carrying our Faith and traditions with them, had preserved these and wrought them into a finer fabric than the original from which they were drawn. And now, when a great affliction had come upon the people of England, their sons of the Greater Britain oversea were holding out kindly hands of friendship and support. But it was not alone in the material sense that we should do well to avail ourselves of the support offered us from the outside places. These wandering children of the Old Land had cherished among them a strong and simple godliness, a devout habit of Christian morality, from which we might well draw spiritual sustenance.

"You have all heard of the Canadian preachers,

and I hope you will all learn a good deal more of their Message this very afternoon at the Albert Hall, where I am to have the honour of presiding over a meeting which will be addressed by these Christian workers from across the sea."

We found John Crondall a giant refreshed after his long sleep.

"I definitely promise you a seat this afternoon, Mrs. Van Homrey," he said, as we all sat down to lunch in the South Kensington flat, "but that's as much as I can promise. You and I will have to keep our feet, Dick, and you will have to share Lady Tate's seat, Constance. If every ticket-holder turns up this afternoon, there won't be a single vacant seat in the whole of that great hall."

"You earned your Sunday morning in, John," said Mrs. Van Homrey. "Is the Prime Minister coming?"

"No, he has failed me at the last, but half the members of the last Government will be there, and I have promises from prominent representatives of every religious denomination in England. There will be sixty military officers above captain's rank, in uniform, and forty-eight naval officers in uniform. There will be many scores of bluejackets and private soldiers, a hundred training-ship lads, fifty of the Legion of Frontiersmen, and a number of volunteers all in full uniform. There will be a tremendous number of society people, but the mass will be leavened, and I should say one-half the people will be middle-class folk. For to-night, no tickets have been issued. The attendance will depend to some extent on the

success of this afternoon, but, to judge from the newspapers and the talk one hears, I should say it would be enormous."

Just before we left the flat Crondall told us a secret.

"You know they have a volunteer choir of fifty voices?" he said. "It was Stairs's idea, and he has carried it out alone. The choir consists entirely of bluejackets, soldiers, volunteers, Red Cross nurses, and boys from the Army bands."

VII

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity

WORDSWORTH'S *Ode to Duty.*

I HAVE always been glad that I was able to attend that first great service of the Canadian preachers; and so, I think, has every one else who was there. Other services of theirs may have been more notable in certain respects — indeed, I know they were; but this one was the beginning, the first wave in a great tide. And I am glad that I was there to see that first grand wave rise upon the rock of British apathy.

I have said something of the audience, but a book might well be devoted to its description, and, again, a sentence may serve. It was a representative English gathering, in that it embraced a member of the Royal Family, a little group of old men and women from an asylum for the indigent, and members of every grade of society that comes between. Also, it

was a very large gathering — even for the Albert Hall.

It should be remembered that not many weeks prior to this Sunday afternoon, the people of London, maddened by hunger, fear, and bewildered panic, had stormed Westminster to enforce their demand for surrender, and had seen Von Füchter with his blood-stained legions take possession of the capital of the British Empire. Fifty Londoners had been cut down, almost in as many seconds, within two miles of the Mansion House. In one terrible week London had passed through an age of terror and humiliation, the end of which had been purchased in panic and disorder by means of a greater humiliation than any. Now England had to pay the bill. Some, in the pursuit of business and pleasure, were already forgetting; but the majority among the great concourse of Londoners who sat waiting in the Albert Hall that afternoon, clothed in their Sunday best, were still shrewdly conscious of the terrible severity of the blow which had fallen upon England.

Having found Constance her half-seat with Lady Tate, I stood beside one of the gangways below the platform, which lead to the dressing-rooms and other offices. Beside me was a table for Press representatives. There, with their pencils, I noted Campbell, of the *Daily Gazette*, and other men I knew, including Carew, for the *Standard*, who had an assistant with him. He told me that somewhere in the hall his paper had a special descriptive writer as well.

Looking up and down that vast building, from dome to amphitheatre, I experienced, as it were vicari-

ously, something of the nervousness of stage fright. Londoners were not simple prairie folk, I thought. How should my friend George Stairs hold that multitude? Two plain men from Western Canada, accustomed to minister to farmers and miners, what could they say to engage and hold these serried thousands of Londoners, the most blasé people in England? I had never heard either of the preachers speak in public, but — I looked out over that assemblage, and I was horribly afraid for my friends. A Church of England clergyman and a Nonconformist minister from Canada, and I told myself they had never had so much as an elocution lesson between them!

And then the Bishop of London appeared on the crowded platform, followed by George Stairs and Arthur Reynolds; and a dead silence descended upon the hall. In the forefront of the platform was a plain table with a chair at either end of it, and a larger one in the middle. Here the Bishop and the two preachers placed themselves. Then the Bishop rose with right hand uplifted, and said solemnly:

"May God bless to us all the Message which His two servants have brought us from oversea; for Christ's sake, Amen."

George Stairs remained kneeling at his end of the table. But as the Bishop resumed his seat Arthur Reynolds stepped forward, and, pitching his voice well, said:

"My friends, let us sing the British Anthem."

And at that the great organ spoke, and the choir of sailors, soldiers, and nurses led the singing of the National Anthem. The first bar was sung by the

choir alone, but by the time the third bar was reached thousands among the standing congregation were singing with them, and the volume of sound was most impressive. I think that a good many people besides myself found this solemn singing of the Anthem, from its first line to its last, something of a revelation. It made "God Save the King" a real prayer instead of a musical intimation that hats might be felt for and carriages ordered. It struck a note which the Canadian preachers desired to strike. They began with a National Hymn which was a prayer for King and Country. The people were at first startled, and then pleased, and then stirred by a departure from all customs known to them. And that this should be so was, I apprehend, the deliberate intention of the Canadian preachers.

Still George Stairs knelt at his end of the bare table.

As the last note of the organ accompaniment died away, Arthur Reynolds stepped to the front.

"Will you all pray, please?" he said. He closed his eyes and extended one hand.

I cannot tell you what simple magic the man used. I know those were his words. But the compelling appeal in them was most remarkable. There was something childlike about his simple request. I do not think any one could have scoffed at the man. After a minute's silence, he prayed aloud, and this is what he said:

"Father in Heaven, give us strength to understand our duty and to do it. Thou knowest that two of the least among Thy servants have crossed the sea

to give a Message to their kinsmen in England. Our kinsmen are a great and proud people, and we, as Thou knowest, are but very simple men. But our Message is from Thee, and with Thee all things are possible. Father, have pity upon our weakness today. Open to us the hearts of even the proudest and the greatest of our kinsmen. Do not let them scorn us. And, O Father of all men, gentle and simple, breathe Thou upon us that we may have a strength not of ourselves; a power worthy of the Message we bring, which shall make its truth to shine so that none may mistake it. For Christ's sake. Amen."

Arthur Reynolds resumed his seat, and a great Australian singer, a *prima donna* of world-wide repute, stepped forward very simply and sang as a solo the hymn beginning:

> Church of the Living God,
> Pillar and ground of truth,
> Keep the old paths the fathers trod
> In thy illumined youth.

The prayer had softened all hearts by its simplicity, its humility. The exquisitely rendered hymn attuned all minds to thoughts of ancient, simple piety, and the traditions which guided and inspired our race in the past. When it was ended, and not till then, George Stairs rose from his knees, and stepped forward to where a little temporary extension jutted out beyond the rest of the platform. He stood there with both hands by his side, and a Bible held in one of them. His head inclined a little forward. It was an attitude suggestive rather of

submission to that great assembly, or to some Power above it, than of exhortation. Watching him as he stood there, I realized what a fine figure of a man George was, how well and surely Canadian life had developed him. His head was massive, his hair thick and very fair; his form lithe, tall, full of muscular elasticity.

He stood so, silent, for a full minute, till I began to catch my breath from nervousness. Then he opened the Bible, and:

"May I just read you a few verses from the Bible?" he said.

There was the same directness, the same simple, almost childlike appeal that had touched the people in Reynolds's prayer. He read some verses from the First Book of Samuel. I remember:

"'And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honouredst thy sons above me to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel, my people? Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever; but now the Lord saith, be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold the day is come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, and

there shall not be an old man in my house. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel. . . . And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind. . . .' "

There was a pause, and then the preacher read a passage from Judges, ending with the famous war-cry: "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon." He looked up then, and, without reference to the Bible in his hand, repeated several verses:

" 'And by thy sword thou shalt live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.'

" 'He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.'

" 'For he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.'

" 'And take the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.'

" 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword.' Not the peace of indolence and dishonour; not the fatted peace of mercenary well-being; but a Sword; the Sword of the Lord, the Sword of Duty, which creates, establishes, and safeguards the only true peace — the peace of honourable peoples."

I remember his slow turning of leaves in his Bible, and I remember:

" 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is

the whole duty of man — ' the whole duty —— Yes, ' but isn't Duty rather an early Victorian sort of business, and a bit out of date, anyhow? ' That was what a young countryman of mine — from Dorset, he came — said to me in Calgary, last year. I told him that, according to my reading of history, it had come down a little farther than early Victorian days. I remember I mentioned Rorke's Drift; and he rather liked that. But, of course, I knew what he meant."

It was in this very simple strain, without a gesture, without a trace of dramatic appeal, that George Stairs began to address that great gathering. Much has been said and written of the quality of revelation which was instinct in that first address; of its compelling force, its inspired strength, the convincing directness of it all. And I should be the last to deny to my old friend's address any of the praises lavished upon it by high and low. But what I would say of it is that, even now, sufficient emphasis and import are never attached to the most compelling quality of all in George Stairs's words: their absolutely unaffected simplicity. I think a ten-year-old child could have followed his every word with perfect understanding.

Nowadays we take a fair measure of simplicity for granted. Anything less would condemn a man as a fool or a mountebank. But be it remembered that the key-note and most striking feature of all recent progress has been the advance toward simplicity in all things. At the period of George Stairs's first exposition of the new evangel in the Albert Hall, we were not greatly given to simplicity. It was scarcely

noticeable at that time even among tillers of the earth. Not to put too fine a point upon it, we were a tinselled lot of mimes, greatly given to apishness, and shunning naked truth as though it were the plague. Past masters in compromise and self-delusion, we had stripped ourselves of simplicity in every detail of life, and, from the cradle to the grave, seemed willingly to be hedged about with every kind of complexity. We so maltreated our physical palates that they responded only to flavours which would have alarmed a plain-living man; and, metaphorically, the same thing held good in every concern of our lives, until simplicity became non-existent among us, and was forgotten. There were men and women in that Sunday afternoon gathering at the Albert Hall whose very pleasures were a complicated and laborious art, whose pastimes were a strain upon the nervous system, whose leisure was quite an arduous business.

This it was which gave such striking freshness, such compelling strength, to the simple, forthright directness, the unaffected earnestness and modesty of the Message brought us by the Canadian preachers. The most bumptious and self-satisfied Cockney who ever heard the ringing of Bow Bells, would have found resentment impossible after George Stairs's little account of his leaving Dorset as a boy of twelve, and picking up such education as he had, while learning how to milk cows, bed down horses, split fire-wood, and perform "chores" generally, on a Canadian farm. Even during his theological course, vacations had found him in the harvest field.

"You may guess my diffidence, then," he said, "in

lifting up my voice before such a gathering as this, here in the storied heart of the Empire, the city I have reverenced my life long as the centre of the world's intelligence. But there is not a man or woman here to-day who would chide a lad who came home from school with tidings of something he had learned there. That is my case, precisely. I have been to one of our outside schools, from my home here in this beloved island. Home and school alike, they are all part of our family heritage — yours and mine. I only bring you your own word from another part of our own place. That is my sole claim to stand before you to-day. Yet, when I think of it, it satisfies me; it safeguards me from the effect of misunderstanding or offence, so long as my hearers are of my kin — British."

His description of Canada and the life he had lived there occupied us for no more than ten minutes, at the outside. It has appeared in so many books that I will not attempt to quote that little masterpiece of illumination. But by no means every reproduction of this passage adds the simple little statement which divided it from its successor.

"That has been my life. No brilliant qualities are demanded of a man in such a life. The one thing demanded is that he shall do his duty. You remember that passage in Ecclesiastes — 'The conclusion of the whole matter'?"

And then came the story of Edward Hare. That moved the people deeply.

"My first curacy was in Southern Manitoba. When I was walking from the church to the farm-

house where I lodged, after morning service, one perfect day in June, I passed a man called Edward Hare, sitting at the edge of a little bluff, on a rising piece of ground. I had felt drawn toward this man. He was a Londoner, and, in his first two years, had had a tough fight. But he had won through, and now had just succeeded in adding a hundred and sixty acres to his little farm, which was one of the most prosperous in the district.

"'I didn't see you at church this morning, Hare,' I said, after we had chatted a minute or two.

"'No,' said he; 'I wasn't at church. I've been here by this bluff since breakfast, and — Parson!' he said, with sudden emphasis, 'I shall give up the farm. I'm going back Home.'

"Well, of course, I was surprised, and pressed him for reasons. 'Well,' he said, 'I don't know as I can make much of a show of reasons; but I'm going. Did you notice anything special about the weather, or — or that, this morning, Parson?' I told him I had only noticed that it was a very sweet, clear, happy sort of a morning. 'That's just it, Parson,' he said; 'sweet and clear and clean it is; and I don't believe there's any sweeter, cleaner thing than this morning on my farm — no, not in heaven, Parson,' he said. 'And that's why I'm going back Home to London; to Battersea; that's where I lived before I came here.'

"I waited for him to tell me more, and presently he said: 'You know, Parson, I was never what you might call a drunkard, not even at Home, where drinkin's the regular thing. But I used to get through a tidy lot of liquor, one way and another,

and most generally two or three pints too many of a Saturday night. Then, of a Sunday morning, the job was waiting for the pubs to open. Nobody in our street ever did much else of a Sunday. I suppose you don't happen to have ever been down the Falcon Road of a Sunday morning, Parson? No? Well, you see, the street's a kind of market all Saturday night, up till long after midnight — costers' barrows with flare-lights, gin-shops full to the door, and all the fun of the fair — all the fun of the fair. Mothers and fathers, lads and sweethearts, babies in prams, and toddlers in blue plush and white wool; you see them all crowding the bars up till midnight, and they see — well, they see Battersea through a kind of a bright gaze. Then comes Sunday, and a dry throat, and waiting for the pubs to open. The streets are all a litter of dirty newspaper and cabbage-stumps, and worse; and the air's kind of sick and stale.'

"At that Hare stopped talking, and looked out over the prairie on that June morning. Presently he went on again: 'Well, Parson, when I came out here this morning — I haven't tasted beer for over three years — I sat down and looked around; and, somehow, I thought I'd never seen anything so fine in all my life; so sweet and clean; the air so bright, like dew; and green — well, look at it, far as your eye can carry! And all this round, away to the bluff there, and the creek this way; it's mine, every foot of it. Well, after a bit, I was looking over there to the church, and what d'ye think I saw, all through the pretty sunlight? I saw the Falcon Road, a pub

I know there, and a streak of sunshine running over the wire blinds into the bar, all frowsy and shut in, with the liquor stains over everything. And outside, I saw the pasty-faced crowd waiting to get in, and all the Sunday litter in the road. Parson, I got the smell of it, the sick, stale smell of it, right here — in Paradise; I got the frowsy smell of it, and heard the waily children squabbling, and — I can't tell you any more of what I saw. If you'd ever seen it, you'd know.'

"And there he stopped again, until I moved. Then he said: 'Parson, if you saw a fellow starving on a bit of land over there that wouldn't feed a prairie-chick, and you knew of a free homestead across the creek, where he could raise five and twenty bushels to the acre and live like a man, would you leave him to rot on his bare patch? Not you. That's why I'm going Home — to Battersea.'

"If Hare had been a married man I might have advised him otherwise. But he was married only to the farm he had wrought so well, and it did not seem to me part of my business to come between a man and his duty — as he saw it. That man came Home, and took the cheapest lodging he could get in Battersea. He had sold his farm well. Now he took to street preaching, and what he preached was, not religion, but the prairie. 'Lord sake, young folk!' he used to say to the lads and girls when they turned toward the public-houses. 'Hold on! Wait a minute! I want to tell you something!' And he would tell them what four years' clean work had given him in Canada.

"He got into touch with various emigration agencies. The money he had lasted him, living as he did, for five years. In that time he was the means of sending nine hundred and twenty men and five hundred and forty women and girls to a free and independent life in Canada. Just before his money was exhausted, England's affliction, England's chastisement, came upon her like God's anger in a thunderbolt. Hare had meant to return to Canada to make another start, and earn money enough to return to his work here. Instead of that, my friends, instead of what he called Paradise in Manitoba, God took him straight into Heaven. He left his body beside the North London entrenchments, where, so one of his comrades told me, he fought like ten men for England, knowing well that, if captured, he would be shot out of hand as a civilian bearing arms. One may say of Edward Hare, I think, that he saw his duty very clearly — and did it.

. . . . . .

"But what of us? What of you, and I, my friends? How do we stand regarding Duty?"

I never heard such questions in my life. He had been speaking smoothly, evenly, calmly, and without gesticulation. With the questions, his body was bent as though for a leap; his hands flung forward. These questions left him like bullets. It was as though that great hall had been in blackest darkness, and with a sudden movement the speaker had switched on ten thousand electric lights. I saw men rise to a

half-erect posture. I heard women catch their breath. The air of the place seemed all aquiver.

"My friends, will you please pray with me?"

He leaned forward, an appeal in every line of his figure, addressed confidentially to each soul present. Then his right hand rose:

"Please God, help me to give my Message! Please God, open London's heart to hear my Message! Please God, give me strength to tell it — now! For Christ's sake. Amen!"

One heard a low, emphatic, and far-carrying "Amen!" from the lips of London's Bishop; and I think that, too, meant something to the great congregation of Londoners assembled there.

Immediately then, it was, while the electric thrill of his questions and the simple prayer still held all his audience at high tension, that George Stairs plunged into the famous declaration of the new evangel of Duty and Simplicity. If any man in the world has learned for himself that prayer is efficacious, that man is the Rev. George Stairs. For it is now universally admitted that such winged words as those of his first great exposition of the doctrine of Duty and simple living, the doctrine which has placed the English-speaking peoples in the forefront of Christendom, had never before thrilled an English audience.

His own words were a perfect example of the invincible virtue of simplicity; his presence there was a glowing evidence of the force of Duty. It is quite certain that the knowledge shown in his flashing summary of nineteenth-century English history was not knowledge based upon experience. But neither

the poets, nor the most learned historians, nor the most erudite of naval experts, has ever given a picture so instantly convincing as the famous passage of his oration which showed us, first, the British Fleet on the morning of Trafalgar; then, Nelson going into action; then, the great sailor's dying apotheosis of Duty; and, finally, England's reception of her dead hero's body. The delivery of this much-quoted passage was a matter of moments only, but from where I stood I saw streaming eyes in women's faces, and that stiff, unwinking stare on men's faces which indicates tense effort to restrain emotion.

And so, with a fine directness and simplicity of progress, he carried us down through the century to its stormy close, with vivid words of tribute for the sturdy pioneers of Victorian reform who fought for and built the freest democracy in the world, and gave us the triumphant enlightenment which illumined Victoria's first Jubilee.

"'But isn't Duty a rather early Victorian sort of business, and out of date, anyhow?' said my young countryman in Calgary. To the first half of his question there can be no answer but 'Yes.' To deny it were to slander our fathers most cruelly. But what of the question's second half? Our fathers have no concern with the answering of that. Is Duty 'out of date,' my friends? If so, let us burn our churches. If so, let the bishops resign their bishoprics. If so, let us lower for ever the flag which our fathers made sacred from pole to pole. If so, let Britain admit — as well first as last — that she has retired for ever from her proud place among the nations, and is no

more to be accounted a Power in Christendom; for that is no place for a people with whom Duty is out of date.

" 'And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar? . . . But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, for them that honour me I will honour, and them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. *Behold the days come that I will cut off thine arm!*' "

It was almost unbearable. No one had guessed the man had such a voice. He had recited that passage quietly. Then came the rolling thunder of the: "Behold the days come that I will cut off thine arm!" A woman in the centre of the hall cried aloud, upon a high note. The roar of German artillery in North London never stirred Londoners as this particular sentence of God's Word stirred them in the Albert Hall.

And then, in a voice keyed down again to calm and tender wisdom, the words of the Scriptural poet stole out over the heads of the perturbed people, stilling their minds once more into the right receptive vein: " 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.' "

Like balm, the stately words fell upon the people, as a light to lighten their darkness, as an end and a solution to a situation found intolerable. But, though calm resolve was in George Stairs's gift that day, he suffered no complaisance; and, by this time, he held that great assembly in the hollow of his hand. It was then he dealt with the character of our own century,

as distinguished from that of the Victorian era. It was then his words taught me, personally, more than all he had said besides.

I will not quote from a passage which has been incorporated in hundreds of school-books. It is generally admitted that the end and purpose underlying the civil and national code of our age has never since been more admirably stated than on the day of its first enunciation in the Albert Hall by George Stairs. His words were glowing when he showed us how the key-note of our fathers' age had been the claiming and establishing of rights and privileges. His words stung like whip-thongs when he depicted our greedy, self-satisfied enjoyment of those rights and privileges, with never a thought, either of the various obligations pertaining to them, or of our plain duty in the conservation for our children of all that had been won for us. Finally, his words were living fire of incentive, red wine of stimulation, when he urged upon us the twentieth-century watchword of Duty, and the loyal discharge of obligations.

"Theirs, an age crowned by well-won triumph, was the century of claimant demand; ours is the century of grateful obedience. Theirs was the age of claims; ours the age of Duty. Theirs the century of rights; ours the century of Duty. Theirs the period of brave, insistent constructive effort; ours the period of Duty — Duty — Duty!

"In fighting to obtain all that they won for us, our fathers pledged themselves — and us — to be fit recipients, true freemen. For a moment, misled by the glare of wealth and pleasure, we have played the

caitiff's part; grasped freemen's privileges, without thanks, and with repudiation of the balancing duties and obligations without which no rights can survive. And — 'Behold, the days come that I will cut off thine arm!'

"The God of our fathers trusted them, in our behalf; and we played traitor. So God smote England, through the arrogant war-lords of another people. That blow, self-administered, is Heaven's last warning to England. In truth, the blow was ours, yours and mine; we ourselves it was who played the traitor and struck a cruel blow at Britain's heart. Unworthy sons of valiant sires, we snatched our wages and shirked our work; seized the reward and refused the duty. God in His mercy gave us many warnings; but we hid our faces and pursued our selfish ends. 'Behold, the days come ——'

"But God stayed His hand. England lies bloody but unbroken. There can be no more warnings. The time for warnings has gone by. There can be no more paltering. Now is the day of final choice. Will ye be men — or helots and outcasts? Will you choose Duty, and the favour of God's appointed way for us, of progress and of leadership; or will you choose — pleasure, swift decay, annihilation? Upon your heads be it! Our fathers nobly did their part. Upon your choice hangs the future of our race, the fate of your children, the destiny of God's chosen people, who have paltered with strange gods, blasphemed the true faith, and stepped aside from the white path — the Only Way: Duty!"

He turned, raising one hand, and the notes of the

great organ rose and swelled mightily, filling the hall with the strains of the British National Anthem. Every soul in the building stood erect, and following the choir's lead, that great gathering sang the British hymn as it was never sung before. As the last note throbbed into silence in the hall's dome, George Stairs, who had knelt through the singing of the anthem, advanced, with hand uplifted.

"God helping us, as, if we choose aright, He surely will help us, do we choose Duty, or pleasure? Choose, my kinsmen! Is it Duty, or is it pleasure?"

It was a severe test to put to such an assembly, to a congregation of all classes of London society. There was a moment of silence in which I saw George Stairs's face, white and writhen, through a mist which seemed to cloud my vision. And then the answer came, like a long, rolling clap of thunder:

"Duty!"

And I saw George Stairs fall upon his knees in prayer, as the Bishop dismissed the people with a benediction, delivered somewhat brokenly, in a hoarse voice.

VIII

THE PREACHERS

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
O! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Ode to Duty.

IT was with something of a shock that I learned, while endeavouring to make my way through a dense crowd to the Canadian preacher's dressing-room, that my friend, George Stairs, was lying unconscious in a fainting fit. But my anxiety was not long-lived. Several doctors had volunteered their services, and from one of them I learned that the fainting fit was no more than the momentary result of an exceptional strain of excitement.

Within half an hour, Stairs and Reynolds were both resting comfortably in a private sitting-room at a neighbouring hotel, and there I visited them, with Constance Grey and Mrs. Van Homrey, and John Crondall. Stairs assured us that his fainting was of no consequence, and that he felt perfectly fit and well again.

"You see it was something of an ordeal for me, a nobody from nowhere, to face such an assembly."

"Well," said John Crondall, "I suppose that at this moment there is not a man in London who is much more a somebody, and less a nobody from nowhere."

"You think we succeeded, then?"

"My dear fellow! I think your address of this afternoon was the most important event England has known this century. Mark my words, that great thunder of 'Duty!' that you drew from them — from a London audience, mind — is to have more far-reaching results for the British Empire than the acquisition of a continent."

"No, no, my dear Crondall, you surely overrate the thing," said Stairs, warm colour spreading over his pale face.

"Well, you can take my deliberate assurance that in my opinion you achieved more for your country this afternoon than it has been my good fortune to achieve in the whole of a rather busy life."

Stairs protested, blushing like a girl. But we know now that, so far at all events as his remarks were prophetic, John Crondall was absolutely right; though whether or not the new evangel could have achieved what it did without the invasion is another matter.

Myself, I believe nothing could have been more triumphantly successful, more prenant with great possibilities for good, than the event of that afternoon. Yet I was assured that fully two thousand five hundred more people crowded into the hall for

the evening service than had been there to hear Stairs's address. And I had thought the huge place crowded in the afternoon. As before, the service began and ended with the National Anthem; but in the evening the great assembly was thrilled to its heart by the Australian *prima donna's* splendid singing of Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* in the setting specially composed for this occasion by Doctor Elgar.

I saw very many faces that I had seen at the first service, but I believe that there was a far greater proportion of poorer folk present than there had been in the afternoon. The President of the Congregational Union presided, and the address was delivered by Arthur Reynolds.

As with Stairs, so with Reynolds, Duty was the gist and heart of the Message delivered — Duty, plain living, simplicity; these they both urged to be the root of the whole matter. Both men gave substantially the same Message, there can be no doubt of that; but there were differences, and upon the whole I am inclined to think that Reynolds's address was more perfectly adapted to his hearers than Stairs's would have been if his had been given that evening. Reynolds's diction in public speaking was not quite his conversational speech, because nothing like slang, nothing altogether colloquial crept into it, but its simplicity was notable; it was the diction of a frank, earnest child. There were none of the stereotyped phrases of piety; yet I never heard a more truly pious and deeply religious discourse.

The social and political aspects of Duty were more cursorily treated by Reynolds than its moral and

religious aspect. There was nothing heterodox in the view put forward by this preacher from oversea. A man may find salvation in this world and the next through love and faith, he said in effect; but the love and faith must be of the right sort. The redemption of the world was the world's greatest miracle; but it did not offer mankind salvation in return for a given measure of psalm-singing, sentimentalizing, and prayerful prostrations. Christianity was something which had to be lived, not merely contemplated. Love and faith were all-sufficient, but they must be the true love and faith, of which Duty was the legitimate offspring. The man who thought that any form of piety which permitted the neglect of Duty, would win him either true peace in this life or salvation in the next, was as pitifully misled as the man who indulged himself in a vicious life with a view to repentance when he should be too near his demise to care for indulgence.

"But, even if one could put aside all thought of God and the life compared with which this life is but an instant of time; even then there would be nothing left really worth serious consideration besides Duty. Dear friends, you who listen so kindly to the man who comes to you from across the sea, I ask you to look about you in the streets and among the people you know, and to tell me if the majority are really happy. In this connection I dare not speak of the land of my birth, because, though it is yours as truly as it is mine, and we are all blood-brothers, yet I might be thought guilty of a vain partiality. But I do say that I cannot think the majority of the people of

England are really happy. I do not believe the majority of Londoners are happy. I am sure that the majority of those who spend an immense amount of money here in the West End of London, are not one whit happier than the average man who works hard for a few pounds a week.

"If I am certain of anything in this world, I am certain that the pursuit of pleasure never yet brought real happiness to any intelligent human being, and never will. True, I have met some happy people in London, even now, when England lies wounded from a cruel blow — a blow which I believe may prove the greatest blessing England ever knew. But those happy people are not running after pleasure or concentrating their intelligence upon their own gratification. No, no; those happy people are strenuously, soberly striving to do the whole of their duty as Christians and British citizens. They are happy because of that.

"Oh, my dear friends, do please believe me, that, even apart from God's will and the all-sacrificing love of His Son, *there is absolutely no real happiness in this world outside the clean, sweet way of Duty.* If you profess you love a woman, but shirk your duty by her, of what worth is such love? Is God of less importance to you? Is Eternity of less importance? Are King and Country, and the future of our race and the millions who depend on us for light and guidance and protection, of less importance? As God hears me, *nothing* is of *any* importance, beside the one thing vital to salvation, to happiness, to honour, to life, here and hereafter. That one thing is Duty."

The evening congregation was more demonstrative than that of the afternoon, and though I do not think the impression produced by Reynolds's address was deeper or stronger than that made by Stairs — it could hardly have been that — its effects were more noticeable. The great crowd that streamed out of the hall after the Benediction had been pronounced, testified in a hundred ways to the truth of John Crondall's assertion that the Canadian preachers had stirred the very depths of London's heart as no other missioners had ever stirred them.

By George Stairs's invitation, Mrs. Van Homrey, Constance, Crondall, myself, Sir Herbert Tate, and Forbes Thompson, joined the preachers that evening, quite informally, at their very modest supper board. It must have been a little startling to a *bon vivant* like Sir Herbert to find that the men who had stormed London, supped upon bread and cheese and celery and cold rice pudding, and, without a hint of apology, offered their guests the same Spartan entertainment. But it was quite a brilliant function so far as mental activity and high spirits were concerned. We were discussing the possibilities of the Canadian preachers' pilgrimage, and Crondall said:

"I know that some of you think I take too sanguine a view, but, mark my words, these meetings to-day are the beginning of the greatest religious, moral, and national revival that the British people have ever seen. I am certain of it. Your blushes are quite beside the point, Stairs; they are wholly irrelevant; so is your modesty. Why, my dear fellow, you couldn't help it if you tried. You two men are the

mouthpiece of the hour. The hour having come, you could not stay its Message if you tried, nor check the tide of its effect. I know my London. In a matter of this kind — a moral movement — London is the hardest place in the kingdom to move, because its bigness and variety make it so many-sided. Having achieved what you have achieved to-day in London, I say nothing can check your progress. My counsel is for no more than a week in London; two days more in the west, three in the east, and one in the south; and then a bee-line due north through England, with a few days in all big centres."

"Well," said Reynolds, "whatever happens after to-night, I just want to say what George Stairs has more than once said to me, and that is, that to-day's success is three parts due to Mr. Crondall for every one part due to us."

"And to his secretary," said Stairs. "It really is no more than bare truth. Without you, Crondall, there would have been no Albert Hall for us."

"And no Bishop," added Reynolds.

"And no great personages."

"*And* no columns and columns of newspaper announcements."

"In point of fact, there would have been none of the splendid organization which made to-day possible. I recognize it very clearly. If this is to prove the beginning of a really big movement, then it is a beginning in which *The Citizens* and their founder have played a very big part. You won't find that we shall forget that; and I know Reynolds is with me when I say that we shall leave no word unsaid, or act

undone, which could make our pilgrimage helpful to *The Citizens'* campaign. I tell you, standing before that vast assembly to-day, it was borne in upon me as I had not felt it before, that your aims and ours are inseparable. We cannot succeed without your succeeding, nor you without our succeeding. Our interpretation of Christianity, our Message, is Duty and simple living, and unless the people will accept that Message they will never achieve what you seek of them. On the other hand, if they will answer your call they will be going a long way toward accepting and acting upon our Message."

"I am mighty thankful that has come home to you, Stairs," said Crondall. "I felt it very strongly when I first asked you to come and talk things over. Your pilgrimage is going to wake up England, morally. It will be our business to see that newly waked England choose the right direction for the first outlay of its energy. The thing will go far — much farther than I have said, and far beyond England's immediate need. But, of course, we mustn't lose sight of that immediate need. If I am not greatly mistaken, one of the first achievements of this movement will be the safe steering of the British public through the General Election. With the New Year I hope to see a real Imperial Parliament sitting. By that I mean a strong Government administering England from the House of Commons, while some of its members sit in an Imperial Chamber — Westminster Hall — and help elected representatives of every one of the Colonies to govern the Empire. My belief is there will be no such thing as an Opposition in the House.

Why should England continue to waste its time and energy over pulling both ways in every little job its legislators have to tackle. It sterilizes the efforts of the good men, and gives innumerable openings to the fools and cranks and obstructionists. You will find the very names of the old futile cross-purposes of party warfare will fall into the limbo which has swallowed up the pillory, the stocks, and Little Englandism. With deference to the cloth present in the person of our reverend friends here, let me quote you what to me is one of the most strikingly interesting passages in the Bible: '*The vile person shall be no more called liberal.*' It will become clear to all men that the only possible party, the only people who can possibly stand for progress, movement, advance, are those who stand firm for Imperial Federation."

"And then?" said Constance, leaning forward, her face illumined by her shining eyes. Crondall drew a long breath.

"And then — then Britain will have something to say to the Kaiser."

As we rose from the table, George Stairs laid his hand on Reynolds's shoulder.

"Deep waters these, my friend," said he, "for simple parsons from the backwoods. But our part is plain, and close at hand. Our work is to make the writing on the wall flame till all can read and feel: Duty first, last, and all the time. 'The conclusion of the whole matter.'"

"Yes, yes; that's so," said Reynolds, thoughtfully. And then he added, as it were an afterthought: "But was that remark about vile people no more

being called liberal really scriptural, I wonder — I wonder!"

"Without a doubt," said Crondall, with a broad grin. "You look up Isaiah xxxii. 5. You will find it there, written maybe three thousand years ago, fitting to-day's situation like a glove."

On the way out to South Kensington, where I accompanied the ladies, I asked Constance what she thought of my old chum, George Stairs.

"Why, Dick," she said, "he makes me feel that an English village can still produce the finest type of man that walks the earth. But, as things have been, in our time, I'm glad this particular man didn't remain in his native village — aren't you?"

"Yes," I agreed, with a half-sad note I could not keep out of my voice. "I suppose Colonial life has taught him a lot."

"Oh, he is magnificent!"

"And look at John Crondall!"

"Ah, John is a wonderful man; Empire-taught, is John."

"And I suppose the man who has never lived the outside life in the big, open places can never ——"

And then I think she saw what had brought the twinge of sadness to me; for she touched my arm, her bright eyes gleamed upon me, and —

"You're a terribly impatient man, Dick," she said, with a smile. "It seems to me you've trekked a mighty long way from *The Mass* office in — how many weeks is it?"

IX

THE CITIZENS

Serene will be our days, and bright
And happy will our nature be
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Ev'n now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed,
Yet find that other strength according to their need.

Ode to Duty.

CHARLES CORBETT'S *History of the Revival* is to my mind the most interesting book of this century. There are passages in it which leave me marvelling afresh each time I read them, that any writer, however gifted, could make quite so intimate a revelation, without personal knowledge of the inside workings of the movement he describes so perfectly. But it is a fact that Corbett never spoke with Stairs or Reynolds, or Crondall; neither, I think, was he personally known to any member of the executive of *The Citizens*. Yet I know from my own working experience of the Revival, both in connection with the pilgrimage of the Canadian preachers and the campaign of *The Citizens*, that Corbett's descriptions are marvellously accurate and lifelike, and that the conclusions he draws could not have been made more cor-

rect and luminous if they had been written by the leaders of the great joint movement themselves.

The educational authorities were certainly well advised in making Corbett's great work the base from which the contemporary history text-books for use in the national schools were drawn. Your modern students, by the way, would find it hard to realize that, even at the time of the Revival, our school-children were obliged to waste most of the few hours a week which were devoted to historical studies, to the wearisome memorizing of dates and genealogies connected with the Saxon Heptarchy. As a rule they had no time left in which to learn anything whatever of the progress of their own age, or the nineteenth-century development of the Empire. At that time a national schoolboy destined to earn his living as a soldier or a sailor, or a tinker or a tailor, sometimes knew a little of the Saxon kings of England, or even a few dates connected with the Norman Conquest, and the fact that Henry VIII. had six wives. But he had never heard of the Reform Bill, and knew nothing whatever of the incorporation of India, Australia, South Africa, or Canada.

I suppose the most notable and impressive intimation received by the British public of the fact that a great religious, moral, and social revival had begun among them, was contained in Monday morning's newspapers, after the first great Albert Hall services. The recognized chief among imperialistic journals became from the beginning the organ of the new movement. Upon that Monday morning I remember that this journal's first leading article was devoted

to the Message of the Canadian preachers, its second to the coming of the various Colonial delegates for the Westminster Hall Conference. For the rest, the centre of the paper was occupied by a four-page supplement, with portraits, describing fully, and reporting verbatim the Albert Hall services. The opening sentences of the leading article gave the public its cue:

"There can be little doubt, we think, that yesterday's services at the Albert Hall mark the inauguration of a national movement in morals, which, before it has gone far, is as likely to earn the name of the Revolution as that of Revival. A religious, moral, and social revolution is what we anticipate as the result of the mission of the Canadian preachers. Never before has London been so stirred to its moral and emotional depths. In such a movement the provincial centres are not likely to prove less susceptible than the metropolis."

As a matter of fact, I had occasion to know that Mr. James Bryanstone, the preachers' secretary (in whose name John Crondall had carried out the whole work of organization, while I served him as secretary and assistant) received during that Monday no fewer than thirty-four separate telegraphic invitations from provincial centres subsequently visited by Stairs and Reynolds. It was, as Crondall had said: The time was ripe, and the Canadian preachers were the mouthpiece of the hour. Their Message filled them, and England was conscious of its need of that Message.

On Monday and Tuesday the afternoon and evening services at the Albert Hall were repeated.

Thousands of people were unable to obtain admission upon each occasion. Some of these people were addressed by friends of John Crondall's and *The Citizens*, within the precincts of the hall. On Tuesday morning, sunrise found a great throng of people waiting to secure places when the hall should open. On both days members of the Royal Family were present, and on Tuesday the Primate of England presided over the service addressed by Stairs.

During all this time, John Crondall was working night and day, and I was busy with him in organizing the recruiting campaign of *The Citizens*. The Legion of Frontiersmen, and the members of some scores of rifle clubs, had been enrolled *en bloc* as members, and applications were pouring in upon us by every post from men who had seen service in different parts of the world, and from men able to equip themselves either as mounted or foot riflemen. On Tuesday evening the Canadian preachers announced that their next day services would be held at the People's Palace, in the East End. But I fancy that, among the packed thousands who attended *The Citizens'* first public meeting at the Albert Hall on Wednesday afternoon, many came under the impression that they were to hear the Canadian preachers.

The man of all others in England most fitted for the office, presided over that first meeting, in full review uniform, and wearing the sword which had been returned to him by General Baron von Füchter, after the historic surrender at the Mansion House on Black Saturday. The great little Field Marshal rose at three o'clock and stood for full five minutes, wait-

ing for the tempest of cheering which greeted him to subside, before he could introduce John Crondall to that huge audience. Even when the Field Marshal began to speak he could not obtain complete silence. As one burst of cheering rumbled to its close, another would rise from the hall's far side like approaching thunder, swelling as it came.

It seemed the London public was trying to make up to its erstwhile hero for its long neglect of his brave endeavours to warn them against the evils which had actually befallen. At last, not to waste more time, the little Field Marshal drew his sword, and waved it above his head till a penetrant ray of afternoon sunlight caught and transformed the blade into a streak of living flame.

"There is a stain on it!" he shouted, shaking the blade. "It belongs to you — to England — and there's a stain on it; got on Black Saturday. Now silence, for the man who's for wiping out all stains. Silence!"

It was long since the little man had delivered himself of such a roar, as that last "Silence!" There were one or two Indian veterans in the hall who remembered the note. It had its effect, and John Crondall stood, presently, before an entirely silent and eagerly expectant multitude, when he began his explanation of the ends and aims of *The Citizens*. I remember he began by saying:

"I cannot pretend to be a Canadian preacher — I wish I could." And here there was another demonstration of cheering. One realized that afternoon that the Canadians had lighted a fire in London that

would not easily be put out. "No, I am a native of your own London," said Crondall; "but I admit to having learned most of the little I know in Canada, South Africa, India, and Australia. And if there is one thing I have learned very thoroughly in those countries, it is to love England. She has no braver or more devoted sons and lovers within her own shores than our kinsmen oversea. You will find we shall have fresh proofs of that very soon. Meantime, just in passing, I want to tell you this: You have read something in the papers of *The Citizens*, the organization of Britishers who are sworn to the defence of Britain. I am here to tell you about them. Well, in the past fortnight, I have received two hundred and forty cable messages from representative citizens in Canada, South Africa, Australia, India, and other parts of the Empire, claiming membership, and promising support through thick and thin, from thousands of our kinsfolk oversea. So, before I begin, I give you the greeting of men of our blood from all the ends of the earth. They are with us heart and hand, my friends, and eager to prove it. And now I am going to tell you something about *The Citizens*."

But before that last sentence had left Crondall's lips, we were in the thick of another storm of cheering. The religious character of the Canadian preachers' meetings had been sufficient to prevent these outbursts of popular feeling; but now the public seemed to welcome the secular freedom of *The Citizens'* gathering, as an opportunity for giving their feelings vent. I am not sure that it was John

Crondall's message from the Colonies that they cheered. They were moved, I am sure, by a vague general approval of the idea of a combination of citizens for British defence. But their cheering I take to have been produced by feelings they would have been hard put to it to define in any way. They had been deeply stirred by the teaching of the Canadian preachers. In short, they had been seized by the fundamental tenets of the simple faith which has since come to be known to the world as "British Christianity"; and they were eager to find some way in which they could give tangible expression to the faith that was burgeoning within them; stirring them as young mothers are stirred, filling them with resolves and aspirations, none the less real and deep-seated because they were as yet incoherent and shapeless.

I am only quoting the best observers of the time in this description of public feeling when John Crondall made his great recruiting speech for *The Citizens*. The event proved my chief to have been absolutely right in his reckoning, absolutely sound in his judgment. He had urged from the beginning that *The Citizens* and the Canadian preachers had a common aim. "But you teach a general principle," he had said to George Stairs, "while we supply the particular instance. We must reap where you sow; we must glean after you; we must follow you, as night follows day, as accomplishment follows preparation — because you arouse the sense of duty, you teach the sacredness of duty, while we give it particular direction. It's you who will make them *Citizens*, my

dear fellow — for what you mean by a true Christian is what I mean by a true citizen — our part is to swear them in. Or, as you might say, you prepare, and we confirm. Those that won't come up to your standard as Christians, won't be any use to us as *Citizens*."

Just how shrewdly John Crondall had gauged the matter perhaps no one else can realize, even now, so clearly as those who played a recorder's part in the recruiting campaign, as I did from that first day in the Albert Hall, with Constance Grey's assistance, and, later on, with the assistance of many other people. At a further stage, and in other places, we made arrangements for enrolling members after every meeting. Upon this occasion we were unable to face the task, and, instead, a card was given to every applicant, for subsequent presentation at *The Citizens'* headquarters in Victoria Street, where I spent many busy hours, with a rapidly growing clerical staff, swearing in new members, and booking the full details of each man's position and capabilities, for registration on the roster.

We had no fees of any kind, but every new member was invited to contribute according to his means to *The Citizens'* equipment fund. During the twenty-four hours following that first meeting at the Albert Hall, over twenty-seven thousand pounds was received in this way from new members. But we enrolled many who contributed nothing; and we enrolled a few men to whom we actually made small payments from a special fund raised privately for that purpose. All this last-named minority, and a

certain proportion of other members, went directly into camp training on the estates of various wealthy members, who themselves were providing camp equipment and instructors, while, in many cases, arranging also for employment which should make these camps as nearly as might be self-supporting.

Among the list of people who agreed to deliver addresses at our meetings we now included many of the most eloquent speakers, and some of the most famous names in England. But I am not sure that any of them ever evoked the same storms of enthusiasm, the same instant and direct response that John Crondall earned by his simple speeches. Heart and soul, John Crondall was absorbed in the perfection and furtherance of the organization he had founded, and when he sought public support he was irresistible.

In those first days of the campaign there were times when John Crondall was so furiously occupied, that his bed hardly knew the touch of him, and I could not exchange a word with him outside the immediate work of our hands. This was doubtless one reason why I took a certain idea of mine to Constance Grey, instead of to my chief. Together, she and I interviewed Brigadier-General Hapgood, of the Salvation Army, and, on the next day, the venerable chief of that remarkable organization, General Booth. The proposition we put before General Booth was that he should join hands with us in dealing with that section of our would-be members who described themselves as unemployed and without resources.

For five minutes the old General stroked his beard, and offered occasional ejaculatory interrogations. I

pointed out that the converts of the Canadian preachers (for whom the General expressed unbounded admiration and respect) flocked to our standard, full of genuine eagerness to carry out the gospel of duty and simple living. Suddenly, in the middle of one of my sentences, this commander-in-chief of an army larger than that of any monarch in Christendom made up his mind, and stopped me with a gesture.

"We will do it," he said. "Yes, yes, I see what you would say. Yes, yes, to be sure, to be sure; that is quite so. We will do it. Come and see me again, and I will put a working plan before you. Good day — God bless you!"

And we were being shown out. It was all over in a few minutes; but that was the beginning of the connection between the Salvation Army and that section of *The Citizens* whose members lacked both means and employment. According to a safe and conservative estimate, we are told that the total number of sworn *Citizens* subsequently handled by the Salvation Army was six hundred and seventy-five thousand. We supplied the instructors, officers, and all equipment; the Salvation Army carried out all the other work of control, organization, and maintenance, and made their great farm camps so nearly self-supporting as to be practically no burden upon *The Citizens'* funds. The effect upon the men themselves was wholly admirable. Every one of them was a genuinely unemployed worker, and the way they all took their training was marvellous.

I think Constance Grey was as pleased as I was with the praise we won from John Crondall over this.

A little while before this time I should have felt jealous pangs when I saw her sweet face lighten and glow at a word of commendation from John Crondall. But my secretaryship was teaching me many things. No other woman could ever mean to me one tithe of all that Constance Grey meant. Of that I was very sure. To think of such women as handsome Beatrice Blaine or Sylvia Wheeler, in a vein of comparison, was for me like comparing the light of a candle in a distant window with the moon herself. The mere sound of Constance's voice thrilled me as nothing else could. But I am glad to remember now that I no longer knew so small an emotion as jealousy where she was concerned.

John Crondall was the strongest man of all the men I knew; Constance was the sweetest woman. Here was a natural and fitting comradeship. I thought of my chief as the mate of the woman I loved. My heart ached at times. But I am glad and proud that I had no jealousy.

X

SMALL FIGURES ON A GREAT STAGE

I, loving freedom and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust;
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray,
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Ode to Duty.

IT has often been said of the Canadian preachers that they conferred the gift of eloquence upon all their converts. It is certainly a fact that long before Stairs and Reynolds had traversed half the length of England, disciples of theirs were winning converts to "British Christianity" — as the religion of Duty and simple living came to be called — in every county in the kingdom.

In the same way, the progress of *The Citizens'* recruiting campaign was made marvellously rapid and triumphant in character by reason of the enthusiastic activity of all new adherents. During the second of John Crondall's great meetings in Birmingham, for example, we received telegraphic greeting from the chairmen presiding over one hundred and ninety-eight other meetings then being held for the furtherance of our cause in different parts of the

country. And, in many cases, those who addressed these meetings were among the most famous public speakers in England.

In most towns we spent no more than twenty-four hours, in others no more than twelve hours, and in some we stayed only a third of that time. In one memorable day we addressed immense gatherings in four different towns, and travelled one hundred and thirty miles to boot. But in each one of those towns, as in every centre visited, we left a properly organized committee at work, with arrangements for frequent meetings, and the swearing in of new members.

The Canadian preachers spent only one day in many of the places they visited. But in large centres they stayed longer, because, after the first week of the pilgrimage, the attendances at their meetings became unmanageably large, owing to the arrangements made by railway companies, who ran special trains to tap the outlying parts of every district visited. Advance agents — a hard-working band, many of whom were well-to-do volunteers — prepared the way in every detail for the progress of both the Canadians and ourselves, and local residents placed every possible facility at our disposal.

Never in the history of religious revivals in England has anything been known to equal the whole-souled enthusiasm with which the new evangel of Duty was welcomed as the basis of our twentieth-century national life. The facts that the Canadian preachers were rarely seen apart, and that the teaching of each was identical with that of the other, combined with the general knowledge that one repre-

sented the Church of England and the other a great Nonconformist body; these things divested the pilgrimage of any suggestion of denominationalism, and lent it the same urgent strength of appeal for members of all sects, and members of none. This seems natural enough to us now, ours being a Christian country. But it was regarded then as a wonderful testimony to the virtue of the new teaching, because at that time sectarian differences, animosities even, were very clearly marked, and led far more naturally to opposition and hostility between the representatives of different denominations than to anything approaching united effort in a common cause.

It was during the day we spent in York that chance led to my witnessing an incident which greatly affected me. My relations with my chief, John Crondall, were not such as to call for the observance of much ceremony between us. Accordingly, it was with no thought of interference with his privacy that I blundered into my chief's sitting-room to announce the number of new members we had enrolled after the meeting. John Crondall was standing on the hearth-rug, his right hand was resting on Constance Grey's shoulder, his lips were touching her forehead.

For an instant I thought of retreat. But the thing seemed too clumsy. Accordingly, having turned to close the door, with deliberation, I advanced into the room with some awkward remark about having thought my chief was alone, and produced my figures of the enrolment of new members. After a few moments Constance left us, referring to some errand she had in view. I did not look at her, and John

Crondall plunged at once into working talk. As for me, I was acutely conscious that I had seen Crondall kiss Constance; but my chief made no sign to show me whether or not he was aware that I had seen this.

Although I thought I had accustomed myself to the idea of these two being predestined mates, I realized now that no amount of reasoning would ever really reconcile me to the practical outworking of the idea. Of course, my feeling about it would be described as jealousy pure and simple. Perhaps it was; but I cherish the idea that it was some more kindly shade of feeling. I know it brought no hint of resentment or weakening in my affection for John Crondall; and most assuredly I harboured no unkind thought of Constance. But I loved her; every pulse in me throbbed love and longing at her approach. Again and again I had demonstrated to myself my own unworthiness of such a woman; the natural affinity between Constance and Crondall. Yet now, the sight of that kiss was as the sound of a knell in my heart; it filled me with an aching lament for the death of —— of something which had still lived in me, whether admitted or not, till then.

For days after that episode of the kiss I lived in hourly expectation of a communication from John Crondall. Our relations were so intimate that I felt certain he would not withhold his confidence for long. But day succeeded day in our strenuous, hurried life, and no word came to me from my chief regarding any other thing than our own work. Indeed, I thought I detected a certain new sternness in John Crondall's demeanour, an extra rigid concentration

upon work, which carried with it, for me, a suggestion of his being unwilling to meet one upon any other than the working footing. I was surprised and a little hurt about this, because of late there had been no reservations in the confidence with which my chief treated me. Also, I could not see any possible reason for secrecy in such a matter; it might as well be told first as last, I thought. And I watched Constance with a brooding eye for signs she never made, for a confidence which did not come from either of my friends.

The thing possessed my mind, and must, I fear, have interfered materially with my work. But after a time the idea came to me that these two had decided to allow our joint work to take precedence of their private happiness, and to put aside their own affairs until the aims of *The Citizens* had been attained. I recalled certain little indications I myself had received from Constance before John Crondall's return from South Africa, to the effect that personal feeling could have no great weight with her, while our national fate hung in the balance. And, by dulling the edge of my expectancy, this conclusion somehow eased the ache which had possessed me since the day of the kiss to which chance had made me a witness. But it did not altogether explain to me the new reserve, the hint of stiffness in John Crondall's manner; and, rightly or wrongly, I knew when I took Constance's hand in mine, or met the gaze of her shining eyes, that I did so as a devout lover, and not merely as a friend.

XI

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Through no disturbance of my soul
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy controul;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name;
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Ode to Duty.

FROM the first, the courtesy of the Press was securely enlisted in *The Citizens'* favour by John Crondall. For many months the *Standard*, now firmly established as the principal organ of the reform movement, devoted an entire page each day to the progress of our campaign and the pilgrimage of our forerunners — the Canadian preachers. John Crondall had gone thoroughly into the matter at the beginning with the editor of this journal, and the key-note thus given was taken by the Press of the whole country.

The essence of our treatment by the newspapers lay in their careful avoidance of all matter which would be likely to earn for the movement the hostility of Germany, or of the officers in command of the German forces in England. Our language took on

a new and special meaning in the columns of the newspapers, where reports of our campaign were concerned. Such adjectives as "social," "moral," and the like were made to cover quite special meanings, as applied to the organization of *The Citizens*. So ably was all this done, that the German authorities regarded the whole movement as social and domestic, with a direct bearing upon the General Election, perhaps, but none whatever upon international politics or Anglo-German relations.

In Elberfeld's ponderous history we are given the text of a despatch to the Kaiser in which General Baron von Füchter assured his Imperial master that any interference with *The Citizens* and their meetings would be gratuitous and impolitic:

"Their aims being purely social and domestic, and those of a quasi-religious Friendly Society, resembling something between their 'Band of Hope' and their 'Antediluvian Buffaloes.' The English have a passion for this kind of child's play, and are absurdly impatient of official surveillance. Their incorrigible sentimentality is soothed by such movements as those of the Canadian preachers and *The Citizens;* but even the rudiments of discipline or efficient coördination are lacking among them. Combination against us would be impossible for them, for this is a country of individualists, among whom the matter of obligations to the State is absolutely not recognized. There is no trace of military feeling among the people, and in my opinion the invasion might safely have been attempted five, if not ten years, before it was. The absence of any note of resentment in their news-

papers against our occupation has been quite marked since their preoccupation with the Canadian preachers and *The Citizens*. The people accept it in the most matter-of-course manner, and are already entirely absorbed once more in their own affairs, and even in their sports. British courage and independence have been no more than a myth for many years past — a bubble which your Majesty's triumphantly successful policy has burst for ever."

Another important feature, alike of our campaign and the pilgrimage of the preachers, was their positively non-party and non-sectarian character. John Crondall had been firm upon this point from the beginning. I remember his saying at the first meeting of the executive of *The Citizens:*

"Our party government, party conflict, here in England, have sapped the vitality of the British Empire long enough. I believe the invasion has scotched the thing, and we must be very careful to do nothing that might help to bring it to life again. A Radical, as such, is neither better nor worse than a Conservative. It does not matter two pins what becomes of the Conservative organization, or the Liberal party, as parties. I should be delighted never to hear of either again. Our business is the Empire's business; and we want the people of the Empire with us — the whole lot of them — as one solid party."

Accordingly, no mention of any political party was ever heard at our meetings. We made no appeal to any given section of the community, but only to the British public as a whole. We aimed at showing that there could be no division in national affairs, save the

division which separates citizens and patriots from men worthy of neither name. And that is why Maurice Hall, in his famous *British Renaissance*, was able to write that:

"The General Elections of the invasion year were practically directed and decided by two forces: the influence of *The Citizens* and the influence of the Canadian preachers' Duty teaching. Political opinions and traditions, as previously understood, played no part whatever."

Of course, it seems natural enough now that the British public should be united in matters of national and imperial import; but those whose memories are long enough will bear me out in saying that in previous elections nine voters in ten had been guided, not by any question of the needs of the country or the Empire, but by their support of this party or of that, of this colour or of that. Our politicians had strenuously supported the preposterous faction system, and fanned party rivalry in every way, because they recognized that it gave them personal power and aggrandizement, which they had long placed before any consideration of the common weal. By this they had brought shame and disaster upon the nation, in precisely the same manner that the same results had been produced by the same means, when these were used by the oligarchs of the Dutch Republic, prior to the downfall of the Netherlands.

Indeed, for some time before the invasion our politicians might have been supposed to be modelling their lives and policy entirely upon those of the Dutch Republic in the eighteenth century; particu-

larly with regard to their mercenary spoliation of the nation's defence forces, and their insane pertinacity in clinging to the policy of "cheapness," which killed both the manufacturing and the agricultural industries of the country, by allowing other properly protected nations to oust our producers from all foreign markets, and to swamp our home markets with their surplus stocks. Down to the minutest detail, the same causes and actions had produced the same results a century earlier in the Netherlands; and even as, first, King William of Prussia, and then revolutionary France, had devastated the Netherlands, so had the Kaiser's legions overrun England. It was not for lack of warning that our politicians had blindly followed so fatal a lead. "The Destroyers" were still being warned most urgently at the very time of the invasion by public speakers, and in such lucid works as Ellis Barker's *The Rise and Decline of the Netherlands.*

In spite of the emphatically non-party character of *The Citizens'* campaign, John Crondall kept in close touch throughout with all his political friends, and very many members of Parliament were among our leading workers. My chief's idea was that, when the elections drew near, we should cease to map out our movements in accordance with those of the Canadian preachers, and allow them to be guided by the exigencies of the electoral campaign; bringing all our influence to bear wherever we saw weakness in the cause of patriotism and reform.

Already we had arrangements made for leading members of *The Citizens* to address meetings

throughout the elections at a good many centres. But, before the electioneering had gone far, it became evident that more had already been accomplished than we supposed. Candidates who came before their constituents with any kind of party programme were either angrily howled down or contemptuously ignored. Old supporters of "The Destroyers," who ventured upon temporizing tactics, were peremptorily faced with demands for straight-out declarations of policy upon the single issue of patriotic reform and duty to the State. With a single exception, the actual members of the Cabinet in "The Destroyers'" Administration refrained from any attempt to secure reëlection.

Such an electoral campaign had never before been known in England. Candidates who, even inadvertently, used such words as "Conservative," "Radical," or "Liberal," were hissed into silence. Even the word "Labour" was taboo, so far as it referred to any political party. "Duty," "Patriotism," "Defence," "Citizenship," "United Empire," "British Federation," and, again, ringing loudly above all other cries, "Duty" — those were the watchwords and the platforms of the invasion year elections. The candidate who promised relief from taxation was laughed at. The candidate who promised legislation directed toward the citizen's defence of the citizen's hearth and home, was cheered to the echo.

The one member of "The Destroyers'" Administration who sought reëlection, found it well to assert the claims of his youth by making a public recanta-

tion of all his previously expressed views and policy, and seeking to outdo every one else in the direction of patriotic reform. Though he gulled nobody, he was listened to good-humouredly, and defeated with great ease by Abel Winchester, the Australian, who saw years of work before him, in conjunction with Forbes Thompson, in the supervision of village rifle corps throughout the country.

In many ways the country had never known a Parliamentary election so constructive; in one respect it was absolutely destructive. It destroyed all previously existing political parties. No single member was returned as the representative of a previously existing party. The voters of Britain had refused to consider any other than the one issue of patriotic reform: the all-British policy, as it was called; and the consequence was, that when Parliament assembled it was found that the House of Commons could no longer boast possession of an Opposition.

The members of that assembly had been sent to St. Stephens to busy themselves, in unison, with the accomplishment of a common end; and if one among them should waste the time of the House by any form of obstruction, he could only do so by breaking the pledges upon the strength of which he had been elected. This fact was clearly set forth in the Speech from the Throne, delivered by the King in person. The business of Parliament was in full swing before its second sitting was far advanced. Though then an aged man, the famous statesman to whom the King had entrusted the task of forming a new Cabinet bore himself with the vigour of early manhood, and no

Prime Minister had ever faced Parliament with so great a driving power behind him of unity, confidence, and national sympathy. The fact that for years his name had been most prominently associated with every movement making for unity within the Empire; that he had striven valiantly for many years against the anti-British forces of disintegration; this was admitted to augur well for the success of the Conference of Colonial representatives then holding its first sitting in historic Westminster Hall.

Meantime, the patriotic enthusiasm of the general public seemed to have been greatly heightened by the result of the general elections. By common consent a note of caution, of warning, took the place of the stirring note of appeal and stimulation which had formerly characterized every public address delivered under the auspices of *The Citizens*. Almost without invitation now the cream of the country's manhood flocked into our travelling headquarters for enrolment on the roster of *The Citizens;* and: "Hasten slowly — and silently," became John Crondall's counsel to all our supporters.

The effect upon the whole public of this counsel of caution and restraint was one of the most remarkable features of that period; and it showed, more clearly, I think, than anything else, the amazing depth and strength of the influence exerted by the Canadian preacher's Duty teaching. Our relations with the Power to which we were in effect a people in vassalage, and payers of tribute, demanded at this stage the exercise of the most cautious restraint; and finely the people responded to this demand. In his *His-*

tory of the Revival, Charles Corbett says, with good reason:

"It was the time of waiting, of cautious preparation, of enthusiasm restrained and harnessed to prudence, which must really be regarded as the probationary era of the Revival. It is in no sense a depreciation of the incalculable value of the work done by the Canadian apostles of the new faith, to say that their splendid efforts might well have proved of no more than transitory effect, but for that stern, silent period of repression, of rigid, self-administered discipline, which followed the access to office of the first Free Government.[1] That period may be regarded as the crucible in which British Christianity was tested and proven; in which the steel of the new patriotism was tempered and hardened to invincible durability. The Canadian preachers awakened the people; *The Citizens* set them their task; the period of waiting schooled them in the spirit of the twentieth century, the key-note of which is discipline, the meaning of which is Duty."

I do not regard that as a statement of more than the truth; and I do not think it would be easy to overrate, either the value of the period or the excellence of the response to the demand it made upon them. The only dissatisfied folk were the publicans and the theatre and music-hall lessees. The special journals which represented the interests of this class — caterers for public amusement and public dissipa-

[1] This title, applied by the Prince of Wales in a speech delivered at the Guildhall to the first Parliament which met without an Opposition, remained in use for a number of years afterwards.

tion — were full of covert raillery against what they called the new Puritanism. Their raillery was no more than covert, however; the spirit of the time was too strong to permit more than that, and I do not think it produced any effect worth mentioning.

Here again our difficulties proved real blessings in disguise. The burden of invasion taxation was heavy; all classes felt the monetary pinch of it, apart altogether from the humiliation of the German occupation; and this helped very materially in the development of common sense ideals regarding economy and simple living. Not for nothing had John Crondall called the Canadian preachers the mouthpiece of the hour. One saw very plainly, in every walk of life, a steadily growing love of sobriety. The thing was perhaps most immediately noticeable in the matter of the liquor traffic. Throughout the country, those public-houses and hotels which were in reality only drinking-shops were being closed up by the score, or converted into other sorts of business premises, for lack of custom in their old misery-breeding trade. The consumption of spirits, and of all the more expensive wines, decreased enormously. It is true there was a slight increase in the consumption of cider, and the falling off of beer sales was slight. But this was because a large number of people, who had been in the habit of taking far less wholesome and more costly beverages, now made use of both beer and cider. It was not at all evidence that the consumption of alcohol among the poorer classes maintained its old level. The sales of gin, for

example, fell to less than half the amounts used in the years before the invasion.

And this was no more than one aspect of the great national progress toward realization of the ideals of Duty and simple living. Extravagance of every sort became, not merely unpopular, but hated and despised, as evidence of unpatriotic feeling. In this, I think, the women of England deserve the greater meed of gratitude and respect. The change they wrought in domestic economy was not less than wonderful when one realizes how speedily it was brought about, and how great was the change. For in the years immediately preceding the invasion the women had been sad offenders in this respect, particularly, perhaps, in their vulgar and ostentatious extravagance in matters of dress. Now, the placards of the British Commercial Union, exhorting the public to "Buy British Empire Goods only," became out of date almost as soon as they were printed, their advice being no longer needed.

No more could one see the wives and daughters of England competing with their unfortunate sisters of the *demi-monde* in the extravagance of their attire. One of the first evidences of the effect of the Canadian preachers' teaching that I can remember was the notable access of decorum and simplicity in dress which dominated the fashion of our clothes. In this, as in sundry other matters, I think we were helped by the unprecedented number of Colonials who began to flock into England at this time from Canada, South Africa, and Australia. But, despite the general desire for economy, it is certain that from that

time on the middle-class folk at all events began to wear better clothes and buy better commodities generally — articles which lasted longer, and were better worth using. The reason of this was all a part of the same teaching, the same general tendency. Shoddy goods, representing the surplus output of German and American firms, could no longer be sold in England, however low the prices at which they were offered; and shopkeepers soon found that they lost standing when they offered such goods to the public. Thus true economy and true patriotism were served at one and the same time.

Extravagance in eating, dress, entertainment, and the like, became that year more disgraceful than drunkenness had been a year before in the public eye. In the same way we attained to clearer vision and a saner sense of proportion in very many matters of first-rate social importance. I remember reading that the market for sixty and seventy horse-power touring motor-cars had almost ceased to exist, while the demand for industrial motor-vehicles, and for cars of something under twenty horse-power, had never been so flourishing.

Before this time we had fallen into incredible extravagance in our attitude toward all the parasitical occupations, and paid absurd tributes of respect to many of those who waxed fat upon pandering to our weaknesses. This passed away now, like a single night's dream, and incidentally gave rise to a certain amount of complaining from those who suffered by it. But the public was no more inclined to heed these complainings than it was to fritter away its time and

substance in drinking-bars or in places of amusement. The famous "Middle-class Music-halls" faded quickly into the limbo of forgotten failures, and the most popular of public performers were those — and they were not a few — who forsook grease-paint for khaki, and posturing on stages for exercising on rifle-ranges and drill-grounds.

The word "Puritanism" was still a term of reproach then, by virtue of its old associations; but, as we see things nowadays, there is room only for gladness in admitting that the wave of feeling which swept through the homes of England in the wake of the Canadian preachers, *The Citizens*, and the organizers of the village rifle corps, was in very truth a mighty revival of Puritanism, backed by the newly awakened twentieth-century spirit of Imperial patriotism, with its recognition of the duty of loyalty, not alone to country, but to race and Empire. Yes, it was true Puritanism — stern, unfaltering Puritanism; and it came to England not a day too soon. Without it, we could never have been purged of our insensate selfishness; without it, the loose agglomeration of states, then called the British Empire, could never have been welded into the State; without it, the great events of that year would have been impossible, and the dominion of the English-speaking peoples must, ere this, have become no more than a matter of historical interest.

XII

BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER

Stern lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient Heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong. — *Ode to Duty.*

I SUFFERED no change so far as Constance Grey's demeanour to me was concerned; but certainly John Crondall had altered since the day upon which I had so inopportunely entered his room when Constance was with him. At times I fancied his change was toward me personally, and I thought it curiously unlike the man to cherish any sort of unkindness over an accident. But then, again, at odd times, I watched him with other men among our now considerable train, and the conclusion was borne in upon me that the change had nothing to do with me, but was general in its character. He was more stern, less cheery, and far more reserved than before.

And this I thought most strange, for it seemed to me that, even though Constance and my chief might have agreed that nothing like an engagement between

them must come till our work was done, yet the understanding which could lead to the kiss I had seen was surely warrant enough for a change of quite another character than this one. I thought of it whenever I took Constance's hand in greeting her; and I think my eyes must sometimes have told her what my heart always felt: that in me, this right to do as Crondall had done would have seemed an entry into Paradise, let circumstances and conditions be what they might. And with such a thought I would recall what, to me, would never be the least of Black Saturday's events: that once Constance Grey had lain in my arms — unconsciously, it was true; and that upon the same occasion I had kissed her, and known in that moment that never again could she be as other women for me.

I was often tempted to speak to Constance of the change I saw in John Crondall, and one day in Carlisle I yielded to the temptation. At one and the same time I both craved and dreaded definite news of the understanding between the woman I loved and the man I liked and respected more than any other. I wanted Constance's confidence; yet I felt as though my life would be stripped bare by definite knowledge that she was betrothed. So, moth-like, I hovered about the perilous subject, with a nervous endeavour to lend natural composure to my voice.

"Do you notice any particular change in John Crondall of late?" I asked. And it seemed to me that Constance flushed slightly as she answered me:

"Change? No. Has he changed?"

"Well, he does not seem to be nearly so happy as ——" And there I broke away from a danger-

ous comparison, and substituted — "as he was awhile back."

"Really? But what makes you think that?"

"I fancy he is much more reserved — less frank and more preoccupied; not so jolly, in fact, as he always was. I have thought so for several weeks."

"I am sorry, very sorry; and I do hope you are mistaken. Of course he is overworked — we all are; but that never hurt him before; and with things going so splendidly —— Oh, I hope you are mistaken."

"Perhaps so," I said. "Certainly I think he has every reason to be happy — to be happy and proud; every reason."

And I stopped at that; but Constance made no sign to me; and I wondered she did not, for we were very intimate, and she was sweetly kind to me in those days. Indeed, once when I looked up sharply at her with a question from some work we were engaged upon, I saw a light in her beautiful eyes which thrilled my very heart with strange delight. Her expression had changed instantly, and I told myself I had no sort of business to be thrilled by a look which was obviously born of reverie, of thoughts about John Crondall. Such a sweet light of love her eyes held! I told myself for the hundredth time that no consideration should ever cloud the happiness of the man who was so fortunate as to inspire it — to have won the heart which looked out through those shining eyes.

But it must not be supposed that I had much leisure for this sort of meditation. My feeling for Con-

stance certainly dominated me. Indeed, it accounted for everything of import in my life — for my general attitude of mind and, I make no doubt, for my being where I was and playing the part I did play in *The Citizens'* campaign. But our life was not one that admitted of emotional preoccupation of any sort. We were too close to the working mechanism of national progress. There never was more absorbing work than the making and enrolment of *Citizens* at such a juncture in the history of one's country.

The spirit of our work, no less than that of the Canadian preachers' teaching, was actually in the air at that time. It dominated English life, from the mansions of the great landholders to the cottages of the field-labourers and the tenements of the factory-hands. It affected every least detail of the people's lives, and coloured all thought and action in England — a process which I am sure was strengthened by the remarkable growth of Colonial sentiment throughout the country at this time. The tide of emigration seemed to have been reversed by some subtle process of nature: the strong ebb of previous years had become a flow of immigration. Everywhere one met Canadians, Australians, South Africans, and an unusual number of Anglo-Indians.

"We've been doing pretty well of late," said one of the Canadians to me when I commented to him upon this influx into the Old Country of her Colonial sons; "and I reckon we can most of us spare time to see things through a bit at Home. The way our folk look at it on the other side is this: They reckon we've got to worry through this German business

somehow and come out the right way up on the other side, and a good deal more solid than we went in. We don't reckon there's going to be any more 'Little Englandism' or Cobdenism after this job's once put through; and that's a proposition we're mighty keenly interested in, you see. We put most of our eggs into the Empire basket, away back, while you people were still busy giving Africa to the Boers, and your Navy to the dogs, and your markets to Germany, and your trade and esteem to any old foreigner that happened along with a nest to feather. I reckon that's why we're most of us here; and maybe that's why we mostly bring our cartridge-belts along. A New South Wales chap told me last night you couldn't get up a cricket match aboard a P. and O. or Orient boat, not for a wager — nothing but shooting competitions and the gentle art of drill. You say 'Shun!' to the next Colonial you meet, and listen for the click of his heels! Not that we set much store by that business ourselves, but we learned about the Old Country taste for it in South Africa, and it's all good practice, anyhow, and good discipline."

But, whatever the motives and causes behind their coming, it is certain that an astonishingly large number of our oversea kinsmen were arriving in England each week; and I believe every one of them joined *The Citizens*. Their presence and the part they played in affairs had a marked effect upon the spirit of the time. All sorts and conditions of people, whose thoughts in the past had never strayed far from their own parishes, now talked

familiarly of people, things, and places Colonial. The idea of our race being one big tribe, though our homes might be hemispheres apart, seemed to me to take root for the first time in the minds of the general public at about this period. I spoke of it to John Crondall, and reminded him how he had urged this idea upon us years before in Westminster with but indifferent success.

"Ah, well," he said, "they have come to it of their own accord now; and that means they'll get a better grip of it than any one could ever have given them. That's part of our national character, and not a bad part."

We were heading southward through Lancashire, when the news reached us of that extension of the British Constitution which first gave us a really Imperial Parliament. The country received the news with a deep-seated and sober satisfaction. Perhaps the majority hardly appreciated at once the full significance of this first great accomplishment of the Free Government. But the published details showed the simplest among us that by this act the congeries of scattered nations we had called the British Empire were now truly welded into an Imperial State. It showed us that we English, and all those stalwart kinsmen of ours across the Atlantic and on the far side of the Pacific — north, south, east, and west, wherever the old flag flew — were now actually as well as nominally subjects of one Government, and that that Government would for the future be composed of men chosen as their representatives by the people of every country in the Empire; men drawn

together under one historic roof by one firm purpose — the service and administration of a great Imperial State.

As I say, the realization produced deep-seated satisfaction. Of late we had learned to take things soberly in England; but there was no room for doubt about the effect of this news upon the public. The events of the past half-year, the pilgrimage of the Canadian preachers, the new devotion to Duty (which seemed almost a new religion though it was actually but an awakening to the religion of our fathers), the influx among us of Colonial kinsmen, and the campaign of *The Citizens;* these things combined to give us a far truer and more keen appreciation of the news than had been possible before.

Indeed, looking back upon my experience in Fleet Street, I must suppose the whole thing would have been impossible before. I could imagine how my *Daily Gazette* colleagues would have scoffed at the Imperial Parliament's first executive act, which was the devising of an Imperial Customs Tariff to give free trade within the Empire, and complete protection so far as the rest of the world was concerned, with strictly reciprocatory concessions to such nations as might choose to offer these to us, and to no others.

Truly Crondall had said that the Canadian preachers accomplished more than they knew. The sense of duty, individual and national, burned in England for the first time since Nelson's day: a steady, white flame. The acceptance by all classes of the community of the Imperial Parliament's programme of work proved this. The public had been shown that our

duty to the whole Empire, and to our posterity, demanded this thing. That was enough. Five years before, one year before, the country had been shown very clearly where its duties lay; and the showing had not moved five men in a hundred from their blind pursuit of individual pleasure and individual gain. Army, Navy, Colonies, Imperial prestige — all might go by the board.

But now, all that was changed. My old friend, Stairs, with Reynolds, and their following, had given meaning and application to the teaching of our national chastisement. Religion ruled England once more; and it was the religion, not of professions and asseverations, but of Duty. The House of Commons and, more even than our first Free Government, the Imperial Parliament in Westminster Hall had behind them the absolute confidence of a united people. If England could have been convinced at that time that Duty demanded a barefoot pilgrimage to Palestine, I verily believe Europe would have speedily been dissected by a thousand-mile column of marching Britishers.

But the Canadian preachers taught a far more practical faith than that; and, behind them, John Crondall and his workers opened the door upon a path more urgent and direct than that of any pilgrimage; the path to be trodden by all British citizens who respected the white hairs of their fathers, and the innocent trust of their children; the path of Duty to God and King and Empire; the path for all who could hear and understand the call of our own blood.

XIII

ONE SUMMER MORNING

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
O, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of Truth thy bondman let me live.

Ode to Duty.

WINTER rushed past us like a tropical squall that year, and, before one had noted the beautiful coming of spring, young summer was upon the land. For me, serving as I did the founder and leader of *The Citizens*, life was filled as never before. I had never even dreamed of a life so compact of far-reaching action, of intimate relation with great causes.

I know now that the speed and strenuousness of it was telling upon all of us. But we did not realize it then. John Crondall seemed positively tireless. The rest of us had our moments of exhaustion, but never, I think, of depression. Our work was too finely productive and too richly rewarded for that. But we were thin, and a little fine-drawn, like athletes somewhat overtrained.

Published records have analyzed our progress through the country, the Canadian preachers' and our own; but nothing I have read, or could tell, gives more than a pale reflection of that triumphal progress, as we lived it. In our wake, harlots forsook harlotry to learn something of nursing by doing the rough domestic work of hospitals; famous misers and money-grubbers gave fortunes to *The Citizens'* cause, and peers' sons left country mansions to learn defensive arts, in the ranks; drunkards left their toping for honest work, and actresses sold their wardrobes to provide funds for village rifle corps.

There was no light sentiment, no sort of hysteria, at the back of these miracles. Be it remembered that the streets of English towns had never been so orderly; public-houses and places of amusement had never been so empty; churches and chapels had never been one-half so full. During that year, as the records show, it became the rule in many places for curates and deacons to hold services outside the churches and chapels, while packed congregations attended the services held within. And it was then that, for the first time, we saw parsons leading the young men of their flocks to the rifle-ranges, and competing with them there.

The lessons we learned in those days will never, I suppose, seem so wonderful to any one else as to those of us who had lived a good slice of our lives before the lessons came; before the need of them was felt or understood. "For God, our Race, and Duty!" Conceive the stirring wonder of the watchword, when it was no more than a month old!

The seasons rushed by us, as I said. But one short conversation served to mark for me the coming of summer. We had reached the Surrey hills in our homeward progress toward London. On a Saturday night we held a huge meeting in Guildford, and very early on Sunday morning I woke with a curiously insistent desire to be out in the open. Full of this inclination I rose, dressed, and made my way down to the side entrance of the hotel, where a few servants were moving about drowsily. As I passed out under a high archway into the empty, sunny street, with its clean Sabbath hush, Constance Grey stepped out from the front entrance to the pavement.

"I felt such a longing to be out in the open this morning," she said, when we had exchanged greeting. "It's months since I had a walk for the walk's sake, and now I mean to climb that hill that we motored over from Farnham — the Hog's Back, as they call it."

We both thought it deserved some more beautiful name, when we turned on its crest and looked back at Guildford in the hollow, shining in summer morning haze.

"Now surely that's King Arthur's Camelot," said Constance.

And then we looked out over the delectable valley toward the towers of Charterhouse, across the roofs of two most lovable hamlets, from which blue smoke curled in delicate spirals up from the bed of the valley, through a nacreous mist, to somewhere near our high level.

We gazed our fill, and I only nodded when Constance murmured:

"It's worth a struggle, isn't it?"

I knew her thought exactly. It was part of our joint life, of the cause we both were serving. I had been pointing to some object across the valley, and as my hand fell it touched Constance's hand, which was cool and fresh as a flower. Mine was moist and hot. I never was more at a loss for words. I took her hand in mine and held it. So we stood, hand in hand, like children, looking out over that lovely English valley. My heart was all abrim with tenderness; but I had no words. I had been a good deal moved by the curious instance of telepathic sympathy or understanding which had brought me from my bed that morning and led to our meeting.

"You have given me so much, taught me so much, Constance," I said at last.

"No, no; I am no teacher," she said. "But I do think God has taught all of us a good deal lately — all our tribe — Dick."

There was a rare hint of nervousness in her voice; and I felt I knew the cause. I felt she must be thinking of John Crondall. And yet, if my life had depended on it, I could not help saying:

"It is love that taught me."

Constance drew her hand away gently.

"Would not the Canadian preachers say we meant the same thing?" she said. I had my warning; but, though haltingly, the words would come, now.

"Ah, Constance, it is love of you, I mean — love of you. Oh, yes, I know," I hurried on now. "I

know. Have no fear of me. I understand. But it is love of you, Constance, that rules every minute of my life. I couldn't alter that if I tried; and — and I would not alter it if I had to die for it. But — you must forgive me. Tell me you do not want me to stop loving you, Constance. You see, I do not ask any more of you. I understand. But — let me go on loving you, dear heart, because that means everything to me. It has guided me in everything I have done since that day you came to me in *The Mass* office. Constance, you do not really want me to stop loving you?"

I was facing her now; kneeling to her, in my mind, though not in fact. Her head was bowed toward me. Then she raised her glorious eyes, and gave to me the full tender sweetness of them.

"No, Dick," she said, quite firmly, but soft and low; "I don't want you ever to stop loving me."

Whatever else Fate brings or takes from me, I shall never lose the lovely music of those words. That is mine for ever.

XIV

"FOR GOD, OUR RACE, AND DUTY"

Soldiers, prepare? Our cause is Heaven's cause;
Soldiers, prepare! Be worthy of our cause:
Prepare to meet our fathers in the sky:
Prepare, O troops that are to fall to-day!
Prepare, prepare.

Alfred shall smile, and make his harp rejoice;
The Norman William, and the learned Clerk,
And Lion-Heart, and black-browed Edward, with
His loyal queen shall rise, and welcome us!
Prepare, prepare. — BLAKE.

WE had two other meetings before finally taking train for London; but virtually our campaign was brought to an end at Guildford. Our peregrination ended there, but the Canadian preachers continued their pilgrimage till long afterwards. Scores of rich men were anxious to finance these expounders of the new teaching, and even to build them churches. But Stairs and Reynolds were both agreed in wanting no churches. Their mission was to the public as a whole.

When we returned to our headquarters in London, the membership of *The Citizens* stood within a few hundreds of three million and a half of able-bodied men. And still new members were being sworn in

every day. Some few of these members had contributed as much as five thousand pounds to our funds. Very many had contributed a fifth of that sum, and very many more had given in hundreds of pounds. There were some who gave us pence, and they were very cordially thanked, giving as they did from the slenderest of purses. There were women who had sold dresses and jewels for us, hundreds of them; and there were little children whose pocket-money had helped to swell the armament and instruction funds. Joseph Farquharson, the well-known coal and iron magnate, who had been famous for his "Little England" sentiments — a man who had boasted of his parochialism — must have learned very much from the invasion and the teaching of the new movement. He gave one hundred thousand pounds to *The Citizens* after John Crondall's first address in Newcastle.

When Crondall attended the famous Council at the War Office, he did so as the founder and representative of the most formidable organization ever known in England. He had no official standing at the Council: he took his seat there as an unofficial commoner. Yet, in a sense, he held the defensive strength of Britain in his hand. But several of the Ministers and officials who formed that Council were members of our Executive, and our relations with the Government were already well defined and thoroughly harmonious. It was from the War Office that we received the bronze badge which was supplied to every sworn *Citizen* and bore our watchword — "For God, our Race, and Duty"; and the Government had given substantial aid in the matter of equipment and in-

struction. But now John Crondall represented three million and a half of British men, all sworn to respond instantly to his call as President of the Executive. And every *Citizen* had some training — was then receiving some training.

"The Canadian preachers waked and inspired the people; we swore them in," said John Crondall modestly. "Their worth is the faith in them, and their faith spells Duty. That's what makes *The Citizens* formidable."

"The grace of God," Stairs called it; and so did many others.

Crondall bowed to that, and added a line from his favourite poet: "Then it's the grace of God in those 'Who are neither children nor gods, but men in a world of men!'" he said.

No wise man has ever doubted, so far as I know, that simple piety, simple religion, "British Christianity," was the motive force at work behind the whole of the revival movement. Without that foundation, the enduring results achieved must have been impossible. But this was entirely unlike any previously known religious revival, in that it supplied no emotional food whatever. There was no room for sentimentality, still less for hysteria, in the acceptation of George Stairs's message from that "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God," whose name is Duty. Tears and protestations were neither sought nor found among converts to the faith which taught all to be up and doing in Duty's name.

From the records, I know that eight weeks passed after the famous Council at the War Office before

England spoke. When I say that during that time I acted as my chief's representative in controlling an office of over ninety clerks (all drilled men and fair shots), besides several times traversing the length and breadth of the kingdom on special missions, it will be understood that the period was to me a good deal more like eight days. During that time, too, I was able to help Constance Grey in her organization of the women helpers' branch of *The Citizens*, in which over nine thousand members were enrolled. Constance had an executive committee of twenty-five volunteer workers, who spent money and energy ungrudgingly in helping her.

We kept in close touch with the heads of provincial committees during the whole of that period, and several times we communicated by means of printed circular letters, franked gratis for us by the War Office, with every single *Citizen*.

Then came the day of the now historic telegram which the Post Office was authorized to transmit to every sworn *Citizen* in the kingdom:

"Be ready! 'For God, our Race, and Duty.'"

This was signed by John Crondall, and came after some days of detailed instruction and preparation.

It has been urged by some writers that the Government was at fault in the matter of its famous declaration of war with Germany. It has been pointed out that for the sake of a point of etiquette, the Government had no right to yield a single advantage to an enemy whose conduct toward us had shown neither mercy nor courtesy. There is a good deal to be said for this criticism; but, when all is said and done, I

believe that every Englishman is glad at heart that our Government took this course. I believe it added strength to our fighting arm; I believe it added weight and consequence to the first blows struck.

Be that as it may, there was no sign of hesitancy or weakness in the action of the Government when the declaration had once been made; and it speaks well for the deliberate thoroughness of all preparations that, twenty-four hours after the declaration, every one of the nine German garrisons in the kingdom was hemmed in by land and by sea. On the land side the Germans were besieged by more than three million armed men. Almost the whole strength of the British Navy was then concentrated upon the patrolling of our coasts generally, and the blockading of the German-garrisoned ports particularly. Thirty-six hours had not passed when the German battle-ships *Hohenzollern* and *Kaiserin*, and the cruisers *Elbe* and *Deutschland*, were totally destroyed off Portsmouth and Cardiff respectively; Britain's only loss at that time being the *Corfe Castle*, almost the smallest among the huge flotilla of armed merchantmen which had been subsidized and fitted out by the Government that year.

I believe all the authorities had admitted that, once it was known that our declaration had reached Berlin, the British tactics could not have been excelled for daring, promptitude, and devastating thoroughness. It is true that Masterman, in his well-known *History of the War*, urges that much loss of life might have been spared at Portsmouth and Devonport "if more deliberate and cautious tactics had

been adopted, and the British authorities had been content to achieve their ends a little less hurriedly." But Masterman is well answered by the passage in General Hatfield's Introduction to Low's important work, which tells us that:

"The British plan of campaign did not admit of leisurely tactics or great economy. Britain was striking a blow for freedom, for her very life. Failure would have meant no ordinary loss, but mere extinction. The loss of British life in such strongly armed centres as Portsmouth was very great. It was the price demanded by the immediate end of Britain's war policy, which was to bring the enemy to terms without the terrible risks which delay would have represented, for the outlying and comparatively defenceless portions of our own Empire. When the price is measured and analyzed in cold blood, the objective should be as carefully considered. The price may have been high; the result purchased was marvellous. It should be borne in mind, too, that Britain's military arm, while unquestionably long and strong (almost unmanageably so, perhaps), was chiefly composed of what, despite the excellent instructive routine of *The Citizens*, must, from the technical standpoint, be called raw levies. Yet that great citizen army, by reason of its fine patriotism, was able in less than one hundred hours from the time of the declaration, to defeat, disarm, and extinguish as a fighting force some three hundred thousand of the most perfectly trained troops in the world. That was the immediate objective of Britain's war policy; or, to be exact, the accomplishment of

that in one week was our object. It was done in four days; and, notwithstanding the unexpected turn of events afterwards, no military man will ever doubt that the achievement was worth the price paid. It strengthened Britain's hand as nothing else could have strengthened it. It gave us at the outset that unmistakable lead which, in war as in a race, is of incalculable value to its possessors."

And, the General might have added, as so many other writers have, that no civilized and thinking men ever went more cheerfully and bravely to their deaths, or earned more gladly the eternal reward of Duty accomplished, than did *The Citizens*, the "raw levies," with their stiffening of regulars, who fell at Portsmouth and Devonport. They were not perfectly disciplined men, in the professional sense, or one must suppose they would have paid some heed to General Sir Robert Calder's repeated orders to retire. But they were British citizens of as fine a calibre as any Nelson or Wellington knew, and they carried the Sword of Duty that day into the camp of an enemy who, with all his skill, had not learned, till it was written in his blood for survivors to read, that England had awakened from her long sleep. For my part, if retrospective power were mine, I would not raise a finger to rob those stern converts of their glorious end.

It is easy to be wise after the event, but no Government could have foretold the cynical policy adopted by Berlin. No one could have guessed that the German Government would have said, in effect, that it was perfectly indifferent to the fate of nearly three

hundred thousand of its own loyal subjects and defenders, and that Britain might starve or keep them at her own pleasure. After all, the flower of the German Army was in England, and only a Government to the last degree desperate, unscrupulous, and cynical could have adopted Germany's callous attitude at this juncture.

Britain's aim was not at all the annihilation of Germany, but the freeing of her own soil; and it was natural that our Government should have acted on the assumption that this could safely be demanded when we held a great German army captive, by way of hostage. The British aim was a sound one, and it was attained. That it did not bring about the results anticipated was due to no fault in our Government, nor even to any lack of foresight upon their part; but solely to the cynical rapacity of a ruler whose ambition had made him fey, or of a Court so far out of touch with the country which supported it as to have lost its sense of honour.

In the meantime, though saddled with a huge army of prisoners, and the poorer by her loss of eighteen thousand gallant citizens, Britain had freed her shores. In an even shorter time than was occupied over the invasion, the yoke of the invader had been torn in sunder, and not one armed enemy was left in England. And for our losses — the shedding of that British blood partook of the nature of a sacrament; it was life-giving. By that fiery jet we were baptized again. England had found herself. Once more His people had been found worthy to bear the Sword of the Lord. Britain that had slept, was wide-eyed and

fearless again, as in the glorious days which saw the rise of her Empire. Throughout the land one watchword ran: "For God, our Race, and Duty!" We had heard and answered to the poet's call:

> Strike — for your altars and your fires;
> Strike — for the green graves of your sires;
> God, and your native land!

I find it easy to believe and read between the lines of the grim official record which told us that outside Portsmouth "white-haired men smiled over the graves of their sons, and armed youths were heard singing triumphant chants while burying their fathers."

Meantime, simple folk in the southern country lanes of Dorset and of Hampshire (Tarn Regis yokels among them, no doubt) heard the dull, rumbling thunder of great guns at sea, and the talk ran on naval warfare.

XV

"SINGLE HEART AND SINGLE SWORD"

Yea, though we sinned — and our rulers went from righteousness—
Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garment's hem.

. . . . . .

Hold ye the Faith — the Faith our fathers sealed us;
Whoring not with visions — overwise and overstale.
Except ye pay the Lord
Single heart and single sword,
Of your children in their bondage shall he ask them
treble-tale!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

THE learned German, Professor Elberfeld, has told the world, in sentences of portentous length and complication, that "the petty trader's instincts which form the most typical characteristic of the British race" came notably to the fore in our treatment of the German prisoners of war who were held under military surveillance in the British ports which they had garrisoned.

The learned professor notes with bitter contempt that no wines, spirits, cigars, or "other customary delicacies" were supplied to our prisoners, and that the German officers received very little more than the rations served to their men. The professor makes no mention of one or two other pertinent facts in this connection; as, for example, that none of these "cus-

tomary delicacies" were supplied to the British troops. We may endure his reproaches with the more fortitude, I think, when we remember that the German Government absolutely ignored our invitation to send weekly shipments of supplies under a white flag for the towns they had garrisoned on British soil.

It is known that the officers in command of the German forces in England had previously maintained a very lavish and luxurious scale of living; in the same way that, since the invasion of England, extravagance was said to have reached unparalleled heights in Germany itself. But the British Government which had reached depletion of our own supplies, by assisting our prisoners to maintain a luxurious scale of living while held as hostages, would certainly have forfeited the confidence of the public, and justly so. Upon the whole, it is safe to say that German sneers at British parsimony and Puritanism may fairly be accepted as tribute, and, as such, need in no sense be resented.

As soon as we received Germany's cynical reply to Britain's demand for a complete withdrawal of all the invasion claims, it became evident that the war was to be a prolonged and bitter one, and that no further purpose could be served by the original British plan of campaign, which, as its object had been the freeing of our own soil, had been based on the assumption that the defeat and capture of the invader's forces would be sufficient. Troops had to be despatched at once to South Africa, where German overlordship had aroused the combined opposition of the Boers and the British. This opposition burst at once into

open hostility immediately the news of England's declaration of war reached South Africa. While the Boers and the British, united in a common cause, were carrying war into German Southwest Africa, troops from German East Africa were said to have landed in Delagoa Bay, and to be advancing southward.

In all this, the British cause was well served by Germany's initial blunder; by the huge mistake which cost her four-fifths of her naval strength at a blow. This mistake in Germany's policy was distinctly traceable to one cause: the national arrogance which, since the invasion, had approached near to madness; which had now led Germany into contemptuously underrating the striking power still remaining in the British Navy. It was true that, prior to the invasion, our Navy had been consistently starved and impoverished by "The Destroyers." It was that, of course, which had first earned them their title. But Germany herself, when she struck her great blow at England, hardly wounded the British Navy at all. Her cunning had drawn our ships into a Mediterranean impasse when they were sadly needed upon our coasts, and her strategy had actually destroyed one British line of battle-ship, one cruiser, and two gunboats. But that was the whole extent of the naval damage inflicted by her at the time of the invasion. But the lesson she gave at the same time was of incalculable value to us. The ships she destroyed had been manned by practically untrained, short-handed crews, hurriedly rushed out of Portsmouth barracks. Yet German arrogance positively inspired Berlin with the impression that the Navies of the two countries had

tried conclusions, and that our fleet had been proved practically ineffective.

Prior to the invasion our Navy had indeed reached a low ebb. Living always in barracks, under the pernicious system gradually forced upon the country by "The Destroyers" in the name of economy, our bluejackets had fallen steadily from their one high standard of discipline and efficiency into an incompetent, sullen, half-mutinous state, due solely to the criminal parsimony and destructive neglect of an Administration which aimed at "peace at any price," and adopted, of all means, the measures most calculated to provoke foreign attack. But, since the invasion, an indescribable spirit of emulation, a veritable fury of endeavour, had welded the British fleet into a formidable state of efficiency.

First "The Destroyers," actuated by a combination of panic and remorse, and then the first Free Government, representing the convinced feeling of the public, had lavished liberality upon the Navy since the invasion. Increased pay, newly awakened patriotism, the general change in the spirit of the age, all had combined to fill the Admiralty recruiting offices with applicants. Almost all our ships had been kept practically continuously at sea. "The Destroyers'" murderous policy in naval matters had been completely reversed, and our fleet was served by a great flotilla of magnificently armed leviathans of the Mercantile Marine, including two of the fastest steamships in the world, all subsidized by Government.

We know now that exact official records of these

facts were filed in the Intelligence Department at Berlin. But German arrogance prohibited their right comprehension, and Britain's declaration of war was instantly followed by an Imperial order which, in effect, divided the available strength of the German Navy into eight fleets, and despatched these to eight of the nine British ports garrisoned by German troops, with orders of almost childish simplicity. These ports were to be taken, and British insurrection crushed, ashore and afloat.

If the German Navy had been free of its Imperial Commander-in-chief, and of the insensate arrogance of his entourage, it could have struck a terrible blow at the British Empire, while almost the whole fighting strength of our Navy was concentrated upon the defence of England. As it was, this fine opportunity was flung aside, and with it the greater part of Germany's fleet. Divided into eight small squadrons, their ships were at the mercy of our concentrated striking force. Our men fell upon them with a Berserker fury born of humiliation silently endured, and followed by eight or nine months of the finest sort of sea-training which could possibly be devised.

The few crippled ships of the German fleet which survived those terrible North Sea and Channel engagements must have borne with them into their home waters a bitter lesson to the ruler whom they left, so far as effective striking power was concerned, without a Navy.

Here, again, critics have said that our tactics showed an extravagant disregard of cost, both as to men and material. But here also the hostile critics

overlook various vital considerations. The destruction of Germany's sea-striking power at this juncture was worth literally anything that Britain could give; not perhaps in England's immediate interest, but in the interests of the Empire, without which England would occupy but a very insignificant place among the powers of civilization.

Then, too, the moral of our bluejackets has to be considered. Since the invasion and the sinking of the *Dreadnought*, ours had become a Navy of Berserkers. The Duty teaching, coming after the invasion, made running fire of our men's blood. They fought their ships as Nelson's men fought theirs, and with the same invincible success. It was said the *Terrible's* men positively courted the penalty of mutiny in time of war by refusing to turn in, in watches, after forty-two hours of continuous fighting. There remained work to be done, and the "Terribles" refused to leave it undone.

The commander who had lessened the weight of the blow struck by Britain's Navy, in the interests of prudence or economy, would have shown himself blind to the significance of the new spirit with which England's awakening had endowed her sons; the stern spirit of the twentieth-century faith which gave us for watchword, "For God, our Race, and Duty!"

With the major portion of our Navy still in fighting trim, and twenty-five-knot liners speeding southward laden with British troops, it speedily became evident that Germany's chance of landing further troops in South Africa was hardly worth serious consideration, now that her naval power was gone. On

the other hand, it was known that the enemy had already massed great bodies of troops in East and Southwest Africa, and it became the immediate business of the British Admiralty to see that German oversea communications should be cut off.

Further, we had to face ominous news of German preparations for aggression in the Pacific and in the near East, with persistent rumours of a hurriedly aggressive alliance with Russia for action in the Far East. The attitude of Berlin itself was amazingly cynical, as it had been from the very time of the unprovoked invasion of our shores. In effect, the Kaiser said:

"You hold a German Army as prisoners of war, and you have destroyed my Navy; but you dare not invade my territory, and I defy you to hit upon any other means of enforcing your demands. You can do nothing further."

The British demands, made directly the German troops in England were in our hands, were, briefly, for the complete withdrawal of the whole of claims enforced by Germany at the time of the invasion.

That, then, was the position when I returned to our London headquarters from a journey I had undertaken for my chief in connection with the work of drafting large numbers of *Citizens* back from the camps into private life. Various questions had to be placed in writing before every *Citizen* as to his attitude in the matter of possible future calls made upon his services. I had only heard of seven cases of men physically fit failing to express perfect readiness to respond to any future call for active service at home

or abroad, in case of British need. Here was a shield of which I knew both sides well. The thing impressed me more than I can tell, or most folk would understand nowadays. I knew so well how the god of business (which served to cover all individual pursuit of money or pleasure) would have been invoked to prove the utter impracticability of this — one short year before. I looked back toward my Fleet Street days, and I thanked God for the awakening of England, which had included my own awakening.

My return to London was a matter of considerable personal interest to me, for Constance Grey was there, having been recalled by John Crondall from her active superintendence of nursing at Portsmouth.

XVI

HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

There is a Pride whose Father is Understanding, whose Mother is Humility, whose Business is the Recognition and Discharge of Duty. That is the true Pride. — MERROW'S *Essays of the Time.*

I WAS impatient to reach London, but I should have been far more impatient if I had known that Constance Grey stood waiting to meet me on the arrival platform at Waterloo.

"They told me your train at the office," she said, as I took one of her hands in both of mine, "and I could not resist coming to give you the news. Don't say you have had it!"

"No," I told her. "My best news is that Constance has come to meet me, and that I am alive to appreciate the fact very keenly. Another trifling item is that, so far as I can tell, practically every member of *The Citizens* would respond to-morrow to a call for active service in Timbuctoo — if the call came. I tell you, Constance, this is not reform, it's revolution that has swept over England. We call our membership three and a half millions; it's fifty millions, really. They're all *Citizens*, every mother's son of them; and every daughter, too."

We were in a cab now.

"But what about my news?" said Constance.

"Yes, tell me, do. And isn't it magnificent about the Navy? How about those 'Terrible' fellows? Constance, do you realize how all this must strike a man who was scribbling and fiddling about disarmament a year ago? And do you realize who gave that man decent sanity?"

"Hush! It wasn't a person, it was a force; it was the revolution that brought the change."

"Ah, well, God bless you, Constance! I wish you'd give me the news."

"I will, directly you give me a chance to get in a word. Well, John is at Westminster, in consultation with the Foreign Office people, and nothing definite has been done yet; but the great point is, to my thinking, that the offer should ever have been made."

"Why, Constance, whatever has bewitched you? I never knew you to begin at the end of a thing before."

And indeed it was unlike Constance Grey. She was in high spirits, and somehow this little touch of illogical weakness in her struck me as being very charming. She laughed, and said it was due to my persistent interruptions. And then she gave me the news.

"America has offered to join hands with us."

"Never!"

"Yes. The most generous sort of defensive alliance, practically without conditions, and — 'as long as Great Britain's present need endures.' Isn't it splendid? John Crondall regards it as the biggest thing that has happened; but he is all against accepting the offer."

There had been vague rumours at the time of the invasion, and again, of a more pointed sort, when Britain declared war. But every one had said that the pro-German party and the ultra-American party were far too strong in the United States to permit of anything beyond expressions of good-will. But now, as I gathered from the copy of the *Evening Standard* which Constance gave me:

"The heart of the American people has been deeply stirred by two considerations: Germany's unwarrantable insolence and arrogance, and Britain's magnificent display of patriotism, ashore and afloat, in fighting for her independence. The patriotic struggle for independence — that is what has moved the American people to forgetfulness of all jealousies and rivalries. The rather indiscreet efforts of the German sections of the American public have undoubtedly hastened this offer, and made it more generous and unqualified. The suggestion that any foreign people could hector them out of generosity to the nation from whose loins they sprang, finally decided the American public; and it is fair to say that the President's offer of alliance is an offer from the American people to the British people."

"But how about the Monroe Doctrine?" I said to Constance, after running through the two-column telegram from Washington, of which this passage formed part.

"I don't know about that; but you see, Dick, this thing clearly comes from the American people, not her politicians and diplomatists only. That is what gives it its tremendous importance, I think."

"Yes; to be sure. And why does John Crondall want the offer declined?"

"Oh, he hadn't time to explain to me; but he said something about its being necessary for the new Britain to prove herself, first; our own unity and strength. 'We must prove our own Imperial British alliance first,' he said."

"I see; yes, I think I see that. But it is great news, as you say — great news."

How much John Crondall's view had to do with the Government's decision will never be known, but we know that England's deeply grateful Message pointed out that, in the opinion of his Majesty's Imperial Government, the most desirable basis for an alliance between two great nations was one of equality and mutual respect. While in the present case there could be nothing lacking in the affection and esteem in which Great Britain held the United States, yet the equality could hardly be held proven while the former Power was still at war with a nation which had invaded its territory. The Message expressed very feelingly the deep sense of grateful appreciation which animated his Majesty's Imperial Government and the British people, which would render unforgettable in this country the generous magnanimity of the American nation. And, finally, the Message expressed the hope, which was certainly felt by the entire public, that those happier circumstances which should equalize the footing of the two nations in the matter of an alliance would speedily come about.

To my thinking, our official records contain no document more moving or more worthy of a great

nation than that Message, which, as has so frequently been pointed out, was in actual truth a Message from the people of one nation to the people of another nation — from the heart of one country to the heart of another country. The Message of thanks, no less than the generous offer itself, was an assertion of blood-kinship, an appeal to first principles, a revelation of the underlying racial and traditional tie which binds two great peoples together through and beneath the whole stiff robe of artificial differences which separated them upon the surface and in the world's eyes.

The offer stands for all time a monument to the frank generosity and humanity of the American people. And in the hearts of both peoples there is, in my belief, another monument to certain sturdy qualities which have gone to the making and cementing of the British Empire. The shape that monument takes is remembrance of the Message in which that kindly offer was for the time declined.

The declining of the American offer has been called the expression of a nation's pride. It was that, incidentally. First and foremost — and this, I think, is the point which should never be forgotten — it was the expression of a nation's true humility. Pride we had always with us in England, of the right sort and the wrong sort; of the sort that adds to a people's stature, and sometimes, of late, of the gross and senseless sort that leads a people into decadence. But in the past year we had learned to know and cherish that true pride which has its foundations in the rock of Duty, and is buttressed all about and crowned by

that quality which St. Peter said earned the grace of God — humility.

For my part, I see in that Message the ripe fruit of the Canadian preachers' teaching; the crux and essence of the simple faith which came to be called "British Christianity." I think the spirit of it was the spirit of the general revival in England that came to us with the Canadian preachers; even as so much other help, spiritual and material, came to us from our kinsmen of the greater Britain overseas, which, before that time, we had never truly recognized as actually part, and by far the greater part, of our State.

XVII

THE PENALTY

> We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
> Cannot be truly followed. — *Othello.*

IT would be distinctly a work of supererogation for me to attempt to tell the story of the Anglo-German war — of all modern wars the most remarkable in some ways, and certainly the war which has been most exhaustively treated by modern historians. A. Low says in the concluding chapter of his fine history:

"Putting aside the fighting in South Africa, and after the initial destruction of both the German Navy and its Army in England (as effective forces), we must revert to the wars of more than a century ago to find parallels for this remarkable conflict. There can be no doubt that at the time of the invasion of England Germany's effective fighting strength was enormous. Its growth had been very rapid; its decline must be dated from General von Füchter's occupation of London on Black Saturday.

"At that moment everything appeared to bode well for the realization of the Emperor's ambition to be Dictator of Europe, as the ruler of by far the greatest Power in the Old World. From that moment the German people, but more particularly the German

official and governing class, and her naval and military men, would appear to have imbibed of some distillation of their Emperor's exaggerated pride, and found it too heady an elixir for their sanity. It would ill become us to dilate at length upon the extremes into which their arrogance and luxuriousness led them. With regard, at all events, to the luxury and indulgence, we ourselves had been very far from guiltless. But it may be that our extravagance was less deadly, for the reason that it was of slower growth. Certain it is, that before ever an English shot was fired the fighting strength of Germany waned rapidly from the period of the invasion. By some writers this has been attributed to the insidious spread of Socialism. But it must be remembered that the deterioration was far more notable in the higher than in the lower walks of life; and most of all it was notable among the naval and military official nobility, who swore loudest by lineage and the divine privileges of ancient pedigrees.

"When the German army of occupation in England was disarmed, prisoners in barracks and camps, and the German Navy had, to all intents and purposes, been destroyed, the Imperial German Government adopted the extraordinary course of simply defying England to strike further blows. Germany practically ceased to fight (no reënforcements were ever landed in South Africa, and the German troops already engaged there had no other choice than to continue fighting, though left entirely without Imperial backing), but emphatically refused to consider the extremely moderate terms offered by Britain,

which, at that time, did not even include an indemnity. But this extraordinary policy was not so purely callous and cynical as was supposed. Like most things in this world, it had its different component parts. There was the cynical arrogance of the Prussian Court upon the one side; but upon the other side there was the ominous disaffection of the lesser German States, and the rampant, angry Socialism of the lower and middle classes throughout the Empire, which had become steadily more and more virulent from the time of the reactionary elections of the early part of 1907, in which the Socialists felt that they had been tricked by the Court party. In reality Germany had two mouthpieces. The Court defied Britain; the people refused to back that defiance with action."

For a brief summary of the causes leading up to the strange half-year which followed our receipt of the American offer of assistance, I think we have nothing more lucid than this passage of Low's important work. That the forces at work in Germany, which he described from the vantage-point of a later date, were pretty clearly understood, even at that time, by our Government, is proved, I think, by the tactics we adopted throughout that troublous period.

In South Africa our troops, though amply strong, never adopted an aggressive line. They defended our frontiers, and that defence led to some heavy fighting. But, after the first outbreak of hostilities, our men never carried the war into the enemy's camp. There was a considerable party in the House of Commons which favoured an actively aggressive policy in the

matter of seizing the Mediterranean strongholds ceded to Germany at the time of the invasion. It was even suggested that we should land a great *Citizen* army in Germany and enforce our demands at the point of the sword.

In this John Crondall rendered good service to the Government by absolutely refusing to allow his name to be used in calling out *The Citizens* for such a purpose. But, in any case, wiser counsels prevailed without much difficulty. There was never any real danger of our returning to the bad old days of a divided Parliament. The gospel of Duty taught by the Canadian preachers, and the stern sentiment behind *The Citizens'* watchword, had far too strong a hold upon the country for that.

Accordingly, the Government policy had free play. No other policy could have been more effective, more humane, or more truly direct and economical. In effect, the outworking of it meant a strictly defensive attitude in Africa, and in the north a naval siege of Germany.

Germany had no Navy to attack, and, because they believed England would never risk landing an army in Germany, the purblind camarilla who stood between the Emperòr's arrogance and the realities of life assumed that England would be powerless to carry hostilities further. Or if the Imperial Court did not actually believe this, it was ostensibly the Government theory, the poor sop they flung to a disaffected people while filling their official organs with news of wonderful successes achieved by the German forces in South Africa.

But within three months our Navy had taught the German people that the truth lay in quite another direction. The whole strength of the British Navy which could be spared from southern and eastern bases was concentrated now upon the task of blocking Germany's oversea trade. Practically no loss of life was involved, but day by day the ocean-going vessels of Germany's mercantile marine were being transferred to the British flag. The great oversea carrying trade, whose growth had been the pride of Germany, was absolutely and wholly destroyed during that half-year. The destruction of her export trade spelt ruin for Germany's most important industries; but it was the cutting off of her imports which finally robbed even the German Emperor of the power to shut his eyes any longer to the fact that his Empire had in reality ceased to exist.

The actual overthrow of monarchical government in Prussia was not accomplished without scenes of excess and violence in the capital. But, in justice to the German people as a whole, it should be remembered that the revolution was carried out at remarkably small cost; that the people displayed wonderful patience and self-control, in circumstances of maddening difficulty, which were aggravated at every turn by the Emperor's arbitrary edicts and arrogant obtrusion of his personal will, and by the insolence of the official class. One must remember that for several decades Germany had been essentially an industrial country, and that a very large proportion of her population were at once strongly imbued with Socialistic theories, and wholly dependent upon industrial

activity. Bearing these things in mind, one is moved to wonder that the German people could have endured so long as they did the practically despotic sway of a Ruler who, in the gratification of his own insensate pride, allowed their country to be laid waste by the stoppage of trade, and their homes to be devastated by the famine of an unemployed people whose communications with the rest of the world were completely severed.

That such a ruler and such a Court should have met with no worse fate than deposition, exile, and dispersal is something of a tribute to the temperate character of the Teutonic race. Bavaria, Wurtemburg, Saxony, and the southern Grand Duchies elected to retain their independent forms of government under hereditary rule; and to this no objection was raised by the new Prussian Republic, in which all but one of the northern principalities were incorporated.

Within forty-eight hours of the election of Dr. Carl Möller to the Presidency of the new Republic, hostilities ceased between Great Britain and Germany, and three weeks later the Peace was signed in London and Berlin. Even hostile critics have admitted that the British terms were not ungenerous. The war was the result of Germany's unprovoked invasion of our shores. The British terms were, in lieu of indemnity, the cession of all German possessions in the African continent to the British Crown, unreservedly. For the rest, Britain demanded no more than a complete and unqualified withdrawal of all German claims and pretensions in the matter of the Peace terms enforced

after the invasion by General Baron von Füchter, including, of course, the immediate evacuation of all those points of British territory which had been claimed in the invasion treaty, an instrument now null and void.

The new Republic was well advised in its grateful acceptance of these terms, for they involved no monetary outlay, and offered no obstacle to the new Government's task of restoration. At that early stage, at all events, the Prussian Republic had no colonial ambitions, and needed all its straitened financial resources for the rehabilitation of its home life. (In the twelve months following the declaration of war between Great Britain and Germany, the number of Germans who emigrated reached the amazing total of 1,134,378.)

To me, one of the most interesting and significant features of the actual conclusion of the Peace — which added just over one million square miles to Britain's African possessions, and left the Empire, in certain vital respects, infinitely richer and more powerful than ever before in its history — is not so much as mentioned in any history of the war I have ever read, though it did figure, modestly, in the report of the Commissioner of Police for that year. As a sidelight upon the development of our national character since the arrival of the Canadian preachers and the organization of *The Citizens*, this one brief passage in an official record is to my mind more luminous than anything I could possibly say, and far more precious than the fact of our territorial acquisitions:

" The news of the signature of the Peace was pub-

lished in the early editions of the evening papers on Saturday, 11 March. Returns show that the custom of the public-houses and places of entertainment during the remainder of that day was 37½ per cent. below the average Saturday returns. Divisional reports show that the streets were more empty of traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, than on any ordinary week-day. Police-court cases on the following Monday were 28½ per cent. below the average, and included, in the metropolitan area, only five cases of drunkenness or disorderly conduct. All reports indicate the prevalence throughout the metropolitan area of private indoor celebrations of the Peace. All London churches and chapels held Thanksgiving Services on Sunday, 12 March, and the attendances were abnormally large."

Withal, I am certain that the people of London had never before during my life experienced a deeper sense of gladness, a more general consciousness of rejoicing. Not for nothing has "British Christianity" earned its Parisian name of "New Century Puritanism." As the President of the French Republic said in his recent speech at Lyons: "It is the 'New Century Puritanism' which leads the new century's civilization, and maintains the world's peace."

XVIII

THE PEACE

Fair is our lot — O goodly is our heritage!
(Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!)
For the Lord our God Most High
He hath made the deep as dry,
He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the earth.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

AT a very early stage of the war with Germany, before the end of the first month, in fact, it became evident that, our own soil having once been freed, this was to be a maritime and not a land war. A little later on it was made quite clear that there would be no need to draw further upon our huge reserve force of *Citizen* defenders. It was then that John Crondall concentrated his efforts upon giving permanent national effect to our work of the previous year.

Fortunately, the Government recognized that it would be an act of criminal wastefulness and extravagance to allow so splendid a defensive organization as ours to lapse because its immediate purpose had been served. Accordingly, special legislation, which was to have been postponed for another session, was now hurried forward; and long before the German Revolution and the conclusion of the Peace, England

was secure in the possession of that permanent organization of home defence which, humanly speaking, has made these shores positively impregnable, by converting Great Britain, the metropolis and centre of the Empire, into a nation in arms. There is no need for me to enlarge now upon the other benefits, the mental, moral, and physical advancement which this legislation has given us. Our doctors and schoolmasters and clergymen have given us full and ample testimony upon these points.

Prior to the passing of the National Defence Act, which guaranteed military training as a part of the education of every healthy male subject, the great majority of *The Citizens* had returned to private life. Yet, with the exception of some few hundreds of special cases, every one of *The Citizens* remained members of the organization. And it was that fact which provided incessant employment, not alone for John Crondall and myself, and our headquarters staff, during the progress of the war, but for our committees throughout the country.

Before reëntering private life, every *Citizen* was personally interviewed and given the opportunity of being resworn under conditions of permanent membership. The new conditions applied only to home defence, but they included specific adherence to our propaganda for the maintenance of universal military training. They included also a definite undertaking upon the part of every *Citizen* to further our ends to the utmost of his ability, and, irrespective of State legislation, to secure military training for his own sons, and to abide by *The Citizens'* Executive in what-

ever steps it should take toward linking up our organization, under Government supervision, with the regular national defence force of the country.

It should be easy to understand that this process involved a great deal of work. But it was work that was triumphantly rewarded, for, upon the passage into law of the Imperial Defence Act, which superseded the National Defence Act, after the peace had been signed, we were able to present the Government with a nucleus consisting of a compact working organization of more than three million British *Citizens*. These *Citizens* were men who had undergone training and seen active service. They were sworn supporters of universal military training, and of a minimum of military service as a qualification for the suffrage.

All political writers have agreed that the knowledge of what was taking place in England, with regard to our organization, greatly strengthened the hands of the Imperial Parliament in its difficult task of framing and placing upon the Statute Book those two great measures which have remained the basis of politics and defence throughout the Empire: the Imperial Defence Act and the Imperial Parliamentary Representation Act. At the time there were not wanting critics who held that a short reign of peace would bring opposition to legislation born of a state of war; but if I remember rightly we heard the last of that particular order of criticism within twelve months of the peace, it being realized once and for all then, that the maintenance of an adequate defence system was to be regarded, not so much as a preparation for

possible war, as the one and only means of preventing war.

Constance Grey worked steadily throughout the progress of the war, and it was owing almost entirely to her efforts that the Volunteer Nursing Corps, which she had organized under *Citizens'* auspices, was placed on a permanent footing. Admirable though this organization was as a nursing corps, its actual value to the nation went far beyond the limits of its nominal scope. By her tireless activity, and as a result of her own personal enthusiasm, Constance was able before the end of the war to establish branches of her corps in every part of the country, with a committee and headquarters in all large centres. Meetings were held regularly at all these headquarters, every one of which was visited in turn by Constance herself; and in the end *The Citizens' Nursing Corps*, as this great league of Englishwomen was always called, became a very potent force, an inexhaustible spring of what the Prime Minister called "the domestic patriotism of Britain."

In the earliest stage of this work of hers Constance had to cope with a certain inertia on the part of her supporters, due to the fact that no active service offered to maintain their enthusiasm. But Constance's watchword was, "Win mothers and sisters, and the fathers and brothers cannot fail you." It was in that belief that she acted, and before long the Nursing Corps might with equal justice have been called *The Women Citizens*. It became a great league of domestic patriots, and it would not be easy

to overstate the value of its influence upon the rising generation of our race.

War has always been associated in men's minds with distress and want, and that with some reason. But after the first few months of the Anglo-German war it became more and more clearly apparent that this war, combined with the outworking of the first legislation of the Imperial Parliament, was to produce the greatest commercial revival, the greatest access of working prosperity, Britain had ever known. Two main causes were at work here; and the first of them, undoubtedly, was the protection afforded to our industries by Imperial preference. The time for tinkering with half-measures had gone by, and, accordingly, the fiscal belt with which the first really Imperial Parliament girdled the Empire was made broad and strong. The effect of its application was gradual, but unmistakable; its benefits grew daily more apparent as the end of the war approached.

Factories and mills which had long lain idle in the North of England were hastily refitted, and they added every day to the muster-roll of hands employed. Our shipping increased by leaps and bounds, but even then barely kept pace with the increased rate of production. The price of the quartern loaf rose to sixpence, in place of fivepence; but the wages of labourers on the land rose by nearly 25 per cent., and the demand exceeded the supply. Thousands of acres of unprofitable grass-land and of quite idle land disappeared under the plough to make way for corn-fields. Wages rose in all classes of work; but that was not of itself the most important advance.

The momentous change was in the demand for labour of every kind. The statistics prove that while wages in all trades showed an average increase of 19½ per cent., unemployment fell during the year of the Peace to a lower level than it had ever reached since records were instituted.

In that year the cost of living among working people was 5½ per cent. higher than it had been five years previously. The total working earnings for the year were 38½ per cent. greater than in any previous year. Since then, as we know, expenditure has fallen considerably; but wages have never fallen, and the total earnings of our people are still on the up grade.

Another cause of the unprecedented access of prosperity which changed the face of industrial and agricultural England, was the fact that some seven-tenths of the trade lost by Germany was now not only carried in British ships, but held entirely in British hands. Germany's world markets became Britain's markets, just as the markets of the whole Empire became our own as the result of preference, and just as the great oversea countries of the Empire found Britain's home markets, with fifty million customers, exclusively their own. The British public learned once and for all, and in one year, the truth that reformers had sought for a decade to teach us — that the Empire was self-supporting and self-sufficing, and that common-sense legislative and commercial recognition of this fundamental fact spelt prosperity for British subjects the world over.

But, as John Crondall said in the course of the

Guildhall speech of his which, as has often been said, brought the Disciplinary Regiments into being, "We cannot expect to cure in a year ills that we have studiously fostered through the better part of a century." There was still an unemployed class, though everything points to the conclusion that before that first year of the Peace was ended this class had been reduced to those elements which made it more properly called "unemployable." There were the men who had forgotten their trades and their working habits, and there were still left some of those melancholy products of our decadent industrial and social systems — the men who were determined not to work.

In a way, it is as well that these ills could not be swept aside by the same swift, irresistible wave which gave us "British Christianity," *The Citizens'* watchword, Imperial Federation, and the beginning of great prosperity. It was the continued existence of a workless class that gave us the famous Discipline Bill. At that time the title "Disciplinary Regiments" had a semidisgraceful suggestion, connected with punishment. In view of that, I shared the feeling of many who said that another name should be chosen. But now that the Disciplinary Regiments have earned their honourable place as the most valuable portion of our non-professional defence forces, every one can see the wisdom of John Crondall's contention that not the name, but the public estimate of that name, had to be altered. Theoretically the value and necessity of discipline was, I suppose, always recognized. Actually, people had come to connect the word, not with education, not with the equipment

of every true citizen, but chiefly with punishment and disgrace.

At first there was considerable opposition to the law, which said, in effect: No able-bodied man without means shall live without employment. Indeed, for a few days there was talk of the Government going to the country on the question. But in the end the Discipline Act became law without this, and I know of no other single measure which has done more for the cause of social progress. Its effects have been far-reaching. Among other things, it was this measure which led to the common-sense system which makes a soldier of every mechanic and artisan employed upon Government work. It introduced the system which enables so many men to devote a part of their time to soldiering, and the rest to various other kinds of Government work. But, of course, its main reason of existence is the triumphant fact that it has done away with the loafer, as a class, and reduced the chances of genuine employment to a minimum. Some of the best mechanics and artisans in England to-day are men who learned their trade, along with soldiering and general good citizenship, in one of the Disciplinary Regiments.

Despite the increase of population, the numerical strength of our police force throughout the kingdom is 30 per cent. lower to-day than it was before the Anglo-German war; while, as is well known, the prison population has fallen so low as to have led to the conversion of several large prisons into hospitals. The famous Military Training School at Dartmoor was a convict prison up to three years after the war.

There can be no doubt that, but for the Discipline Bill, our police force would have required strengthening and prisons enlarging, in place of the reverse process of which we enjoy the benefit to-day.

Its promoters deserve all the credit which has been paid them for the introduction of this famous measure; and I take the more pleasure in admitting this by token that the chief among them has publicly recorded his opinion that the man primarily responsible for the introduction of the Discipline Bill was John Crondall. At the same time it should not be forgotten that we have John Crondall's own assurance that the Bill could never have been made law but for that opening and awakening of the hearts and minds of the British people which followed the spreading of the gospel of Duty by the Canadian preachers.

XIX

THE GREAT ALLIANCE

Truly ye come of the Blood ; slower to bless than to ban ;
Little used to lie down at the bidding of any man.

. . . . . .

Deeper than speech our love, stronger than life our tether ;
But we do not fall on the neck nor kiss when we come together.

. . . . . .

Draw now the threefold knot firm on the ninefold bands,
And the law that ye make shall be law after the rule of your lands.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

DURING all this time I was constantly with John Crondall, and saw a good deal of Constance Grey; yet the announcement that I had once expected every day, the announcement which seemed the only natural sequence to the kiss of which I had been an unwilling witness, never came. Neither did any return come, in John Crondall, of his old frank gaiety of manner. There remained always the shadow of reserve, of gravity, and of a certain restraint, which dated in my mind from the day of my inadvertent intrusion upon the scene between himself and Constance.

Knowing John Crondall as I knew him then, it was not possible for me to think ill of him; but he perplexed me greatly at times. For at times it did seem to me that I read in Constance's face, when we three

were together, a look that was almost an appeal to my chief — a half-sorrowful, half-abashed appeal. Then I would recall that kiss, and in my puzzlement I would think: "John Crondall, if you were any other man, I should say you ——"

And there my thought would stop short. Of what should I accuse him? There was the kiss, the long silence, John Crondall's stiffness, and then this look of distress, this hint of appeal, in the face of Constance. Well! And then my intimate knowledge of my chief would silence me, giving me assurance that I should never be a good enough man justly to reproach John Crondall. But it was all very puzzling, and more, to me, loving Constance as I loved her.

You may judge, then, of my surprise when Crondall came into my room at *The Citizens'* headquarters office one morning and said:

"You have been the real secretary for some time, Dick, not only mine, but *The Citizens'*; so there's no need for me to worry about how you'll manage. I'm going to America."

"Going to America! Why — when?"

"Well, on Friday, I believe I sail. As to why, I'm afraid I mustn't tell you about that just yet. I've undertaken a Government mission, and it's confidential."

"I see. And how long will you be away?"

"Oh, not more than two or three months, I hope."

That simplified the thing somewhat. My chief's tone had suggested at first that he was going to live in the United States. Even as it was, however, surely, I thought, he would tell me something now about him-

self and Constance. But though I made several openings, he told me nothing.

While John Crondall was away a new State Under-Secretaryship was created. It was announced that for the future the Government would include an Under-Secretary of State for the Civilian Defence Forces, whose chief would be the Secretary of State for War. A few days later came the announcement that the first to hold this appointment would be John Crondall. I had news of this a little in advance of the public, for my work in connection with *The Citizens'* organization brought me now into frequent contact with the War Office, particularly with regard to supplies and general arrangements for our different village rifle-ranges.

This piece of news seemed tolerably important to Constance Grey and myself, and we talked it over with a good deal of interest and enthusiasm. But before many weeks had passed this and every other item of news was driven out of our minds by a piece of intelligence which, in different ways, startled and excited the whole civilized world, for the reason that it promised to affect materially the destiny of all the nations of civilization. Every newspaper published some kind of an announcement on the subject, but the first full, authoritative statement was that contained in the great *London Daily* which was now the recognized principal organ of Imperial Federation. The opening portion of this journal's announcement read in this way:

"We are able to announce, upon official authority, the completion of a defensive and commercial Alliance

between the British Empire and the United States of America, which amounts for all practical purposes to a political and commercial Federation of the English-speaking peoples of the world.

"Rumours have been current for some time of important negotiations pending between London and Washington, and, as we pointed out some time ago, Mr. John Crondall's business in Washington has been entirely with our Ambassador there.

"The exact terms of the new Alliance will probably be made public within the next week. In the meantime, we are able to say that the Alliance will be sufficiently comprehensive to admit United States trade within the British Empire upon practically British terms — that is to say, the United States will, in almost every detail, share in Imperial Preference.

"Further, in the event of any foreign Power declaring war with either the British Empire or the United States, both nations would share equally in the conduct of subsequent hostilities, unless the war were the direct outcome of an effort upon the part of either of the high contracting parties in the direction of territorial expansion. The United States will not assist the British Empire to acquire new territory, but will share from first to last the task of defending existing British territory against the attack of an enemy. Precisely the same obligations will bind the British Empire in the defence of the United States.

"It would scarcely be possible to exaggerate the importance to Christendom of this momentous achievement of diplomacy; and future generations are little likely to forget the act or the spirit to which this

triumph may be traced: the United States' offer of assistance to Britain during the late war.

"The advantages of the Alliance to our good friends and kinsmen across the Atlantic are obviously great, for they are at once given free entry into a market which has four hundred and twenty millions of customers, and is protected by the world's greatest Navy and the world's greatest citizen defence force. Upon our side we are given free entry into the second richest and most expansive market in the world, with eighty million customers, and an adequate defence force. Upon a preferential footing, such as the Alliance will secure to both contracting Powers, the United States offer us the finest market in the world as an extension of our own. In our own markets we shall meet the American producer upon terms of absolute equality, to our mutual advantage, where a couple of years ago we met him at a cruel disadvantage, to our great loss.

"We have said enough to indicate the vast and world-wide importance of the Alliance we are able to announce. But we have left untouched its most momentous aspect. The new Alliance is a guarantee of peace to that half of the world which is primarily concerned; it renders a breach of the peace in the other half of the world far more unlikely than it ever was before. As a defensive Alliance between the English-speaking peoples, this should represent the beginning of an era of unexampled peace, progress, and prosperity for the whole civilized world."

Before I had half-digested this tremendous piece of news, and with never a thought of breakfast, I found

myself hurrying in a hansom to Constance Grey's flat. In her study I found Constance, her beautiful eyes full of shining tears, poring over the announcement.

XX

PEACE HATH HER VICTORIES

> Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.
>
> TENNYSON.

I HAD hoped to be the bearer of the Alliance news to Constance, and seeing how deeply she was moved by it made me the more regretful that I had not arrived at the flat before her morning paper. Constance had been the first to give me the news of the American offer of help at the beginning of the war; she had been the first to give me any serious understanding of the invasion, there in that very room of the little South Kensington flat, on the fateful Sunday of the Disarmament Demonstration. Now she raised her gleaming eyes to me as I entered:

"A thing like this makes up for all the ills one's ever known, Dick," she said, and dropped one hand on the paper in her lap.

"Yes, it's something like a piece of news, is it not? I had hoped to bring it you, but I might have known you would be at your paper betimes."

"Oh, it's magnificent, Dick, magnificent! I have no words to tell you how glad I am about this. I see John Crondall's hand here, don't you?"

"Yes," I said; and thought: "Naturally! You see John Crondall everywhere."

"He was dead against any sort of an Alliance while we were under a cloud. And he was right. The British people couldn't afford to enter any compact upon terms of less than perfect equality and independence. But now — why, Dick, it's a dream come true: the English-speaking peoples against the world. It's Imperial Federation founded on solid rock. No! With its roots in the beds of all the seven seas. And never a hint of condescension, but just an honourable pact between equals of one stock."

"Yes; and a couple of years ago ——"

"A couple of years ago, there were Englishmen who spat at the British Flag."

"There was a paper called *The Mass*."

Constance smiled up at me. "Do you remember the Disarmament Demonstration?" she said.

"Do you remember going down Fleet Street into a wretched den, to call on the person who was assistant editor of *The Mass?*"

"The person! Come! I found him rather nice."

"Ah, Constance, how sweet you were to me!"

"Now, there," she said, with a little smile, "I think you might have changed your tense."

"But I was talking of two years ago, before — Well, you see, I thought of you, then, as just an unattached angel from South Africa."

"And now you have learned that my angelic qualities never existed outside your imagination. Ah, Dick, your explanations make matters much worse."

"But, no; I didn't say you were the less an angel;

only that I thought of you as unattached, then — you see."

Constance looked down at her paper, and a silence fell between us. The silence was intolerable to me. I was standing beside her chair, and I cannot explain just what I felt in looking down at her. I know that the very outline of her figure and the loose hair of her head seemed at once intimately familiar and inexpressibly sacred and beautiful to me. Looking down upon them caused a kind of mist to rise before my eyes. It was as though I feared to lose possession of my faculties. That must end, I felt, or an end would come to all reserve and loyalty to John Crondall. And yet — yet something in the curve of her cheek — she was looking down — held me, drew me out of myself, as it might be into a tranced state in which a man is moved to contempt of all risks.

"Dear, I loved you, even then," I said; "but then I thought you free."

"So I was." She did not look at me, and her voice was very low; but there was some quality in it which thrilled me through and through, as I stood at her side.

"But now, of course, I know —— But why have you never told me, Constance?"

"I am just as free now as then, Dick."

"Why, Constance! But, John Crondall?"

"He is my friend, just as he is yours."

"But I — but he ——"

"Dick, I asked him if I might tell you, and he said, yes. John asked me to marry him, and when I said I couldn't, he asked me to wait till our work was done,

and let him ask me again. Can't you see, Dick, how hard it was for me? And John is — he is such a splendid man. I could not deny him, and — that was when you came into the room — don't you remember — Dick?"

The mist was thickening about me; it seemed my mind swam in clouds. I only said: "Yes?"

"Oh, Dick, I am ashamed! You know how I respect him — how I like him. He did ask me again, before he went to America."

"And now — now, you ——"

"It hurt dreadfully; but I had to say no, because ——"

And there she stopped. She was not engaged to John Crondall. She had refused him — refused John Crondall! Yet I knew how high he stood in her eyes. Could it be that there was some one else — some one in Africa? The suggestion spelled panic. It seemed to me that I must know — that I could not bear to leave her without knowing.

"Forgive me, Constance," I said, "but is there some one else who — is there some one else?" To see into her dear face, I dropped on one knee beside her chair.

"I — I thought there was," she said very sweetly. And as she spoke she raised her head, and I saw her beautiful eyes, through tears. It was there I read my happiness. I am not sure that any words could have given it me, though I found it sweeter than anything else I had known in my life to have her tell me afterwards in words. It was an unforgettable morning.

> Why did she love him? Curious fool! be still;
> Is human love the growth of human will?

John Crondall was my best man, as he has been always my best friend. He insisted on my taking over the permanent secretaryship of *The Citizens* when he went to the War Office. And since then I hope I have not ceased to take my part in making our history; but it is true that there is not much to tell that is not known equally well to everybody.

Assuredly peace hath her victories. Our national life has been a daily succession of victories since we fought for and won real peace and overcame the slavish notion that mere indolent quiescence could ever give security. Our daily victory as a race is the triumph of race loyalty over individual self-seeking; and I can conceive of no real danger for the British Empire unless the day came, which God forbid, when Englishmen forgot the gospel of our "New Century Puritanism" — the Canadian preachers' teaching of Duty and simple living. And that day can never come while our *Citizens*' watchword endures:

"For God, our Race, and Duty!"

For me, I feel that my share of happiness, since those sombre days of our national chastisement, since those stern, strenuous months of England's awakening to the new life and faith of the twentieth century, has been more, far more, than my deserts. But I think we all feel that in these days; I hope we do. If we should ever again forget, punishment would surely come. But it is part of my happiness to believe

that, at long last, our now really united race, our whole family, four hundred and twenty millions strong, has truly learned the lesson which our great patriot poet tried to teach in the wild years before discipline came to us, in the mailed hand of our one-time enemy:

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath Whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

. . . . . .

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word —
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

Amen!

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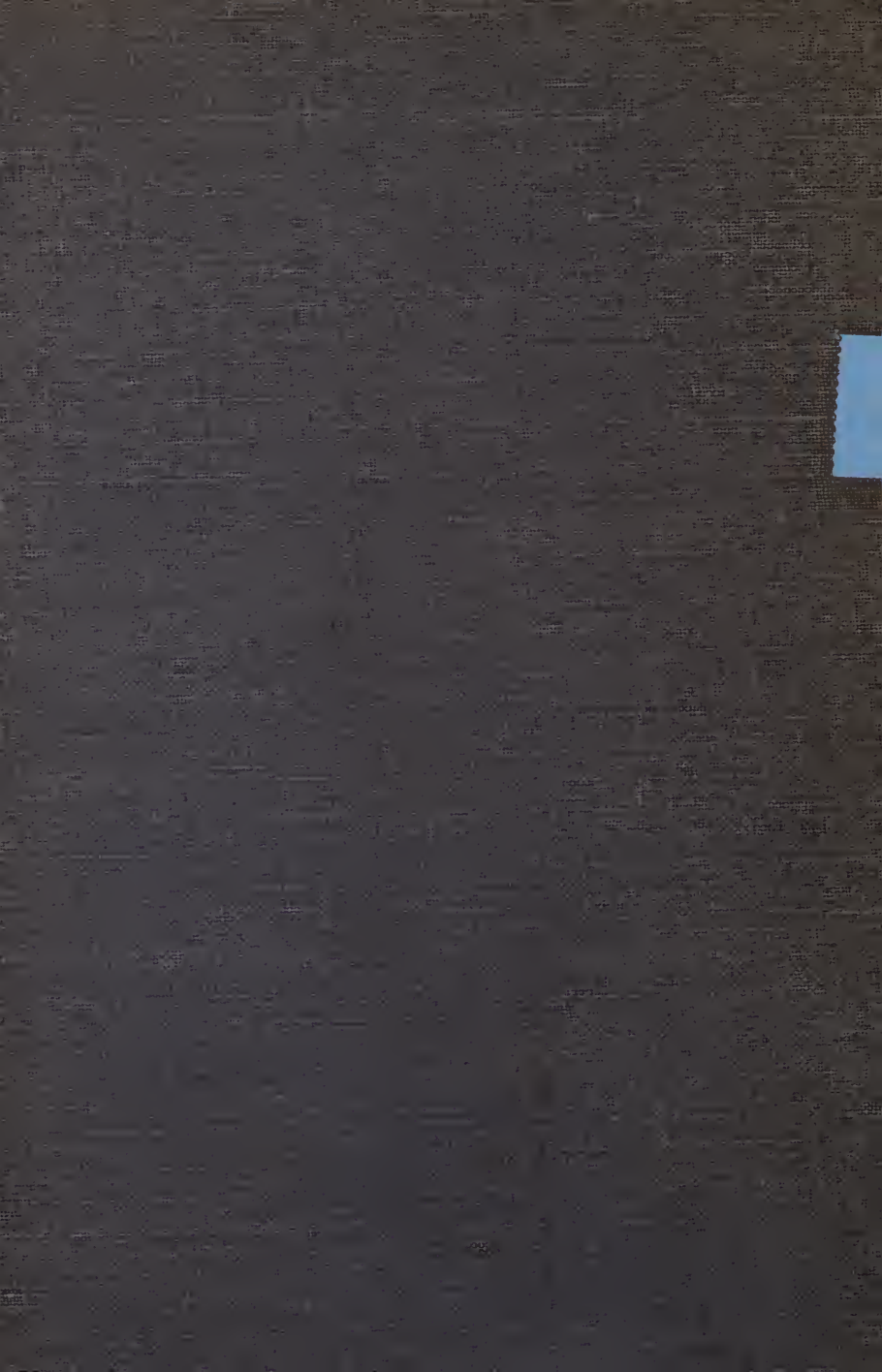
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